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Islamic Affairs

OIC Ministerial Session Concludes in Conakry

Speakers Condemn Islamic 'Fundamentalism'

AB0912192395 London BBC World Service in English 1705 GMT 9 Dec 95

[From the "Focus on Africa" program"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The 23d congress of foreign ministers of the Organization of the Islamic Conference, OIC, has held its opening session in Conakry. It was officially launched by Guinea President Lansana Conte who set the tone with an attack on the activities of Islamic militants. From Conakry, Foday Fofana telexed this report:

Delivering his opening address, Guinea's head of state and vice president of the Islamic Conference, Lansana Conte, expressed concern over the activities of certain extremists due to whom, he said, the Islamic religion was victim of aggression of a rare brutality. He continued: The majority of people in Guinea are Muslims and believe that everything must be done to prevent external aggression without forgetting the dangers that exist internally.

Criticism of Islamic fundamentalism was almost unanimous with speaker after speaker condemning the phenomenon which they think is against the principles of Islam. The Islamic conference is being held amid exceptionally tight security with the military taking no chances at all, and the opening session broadcast live on radio and television.

The Iranians themselves made a spectacular appearance here with a 70-man delegation flown in by a special flight, and led by Foreign Minister 'Ali Akbar Velayati. Iran has a strong profile in Guinea as it financed the construction of dozens of mosques and Koranic schools around the country. Recently, Iran set up a company to exploit bauxite in Dabola and Tougue. The Guinean Government also enjoys privileged relations with moderate Arab countries like Kuwait and Saudi Arabia, and they have made it abundantly clear that they will suppress any attempts at promoting Islamic fundamentalism here.

Guinea's Conte Praises Iran

LD1212183995 Tehran IRNA in English 1823 GMT 12 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Conakry, Guinea, Dec. 12, IRNA — Iranian Foreign Minister 'Ali Akbar Velayati who is currently here for the 23rd ministerial meeting of Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC), today met with Guinean President Lansana Conte.

In the meeting, the Guinean President praised Iran for attaching importance to the OIC meeting and called for promotion of relations between and Tehran and Conakry.

He said the two countries share views regarding expansion of bilateral ties and that Guinea was ready for using all the existing potentials in order to promote its cooperation with Iran.

Velayati thanked Guinea for hosting the OIC session and playing an "effective" in it, and said the OIC meeting proved "effective" in drawing attention towards removal of problems of the Muslim world.

Assessing as "positive" the two sides' cooperation in the area of mines and minerals, he called for upgrading of cooperation in the fields of health service, culture and trade.

The Iranian minister also referred to the common interests of the two countries for setting up close cooperation and said the Islamic Iran will welcome Tehran-Conakry cooperation in various areas.

Velayati Comments on Bosnia

NC1212080295 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 0330 GMT 12 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] The foreign ministers of the Organization of the Islamic Conference [OIC] Contact Group held a meeting on Bosnia in Guinea yesterday. The foreign ministers and heads of delegations from the Islamic Republic of Iran, Pakistan, Turkey, Malaysia, Egypt, Morocco, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, and Bosnia-Herzegovina exchanged views.

We invite you to listen to a report on Foreign Minister Velayati's speech at the session:

[Begin unidentified correspondent recording] During the OIC's Contact Group session, Foreign Minister Velayati referred to comments by the Bosnian president and other officials on the recent peace accord and said: The document and the proposed solution are unjust; this document was accepted for the sake of achieving peace.

He added: Despite this, the Islamic countries should continue to follow up their plans and efforts to rebuild Bosnia economically and militarily, because without a military balance the Bosnian Muslims will again become the victims of Serb aggression.

Velayati said: The Islamic countries should continue their efforts within the Islamic Contact Group and the group in charge of mobilizing aid for Bosnia, which was formed recently in Tehran.

Our foreign minister then referred to the joint session of the Islamic and Western contact groups, which will meet in Paris on Wednesday [13 December], and said: Basic issues, particularly the need to safeguard Bosnia's territorial integrity and sovereignty, the need to safeguard Sarajevo's unity as the Bosnian capital, and other topics that were not clear in the recent peace pact and discussions will be covered to take them in the right direction.

Reporting for the Voice and Vision of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Conakry, Guinea. [end recording]

Session Ends

AB1312121795 Conakry Radiodiffusion Nationale de la Republique de Guinee in French
1945 GMT 12 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Deliberations at the 23d ministerial session of the Organization of the Islamic Conference [OIC] ended today. The session ended earlier than scheduled because of the OIC contact group's participation in the signing of the Dayton Accord on Bosnia-Herzegovina scheduled to take place in Paris on 14 December. Yesterday, the group worked behind closed doors to thrash out the diverse positions of OIC member countries. The OIC contact group comprises Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Iran, Malaysia, Morocco, Pakistan, Senegal, and Turkey. [passage omitted]

The closing ceremony of the 23d session of the OIC Council of Ministers was marked by the admission of Kazakhstan as the 52d member of the OIC. [passage omitted]

Political Islam Review: AL-SHA'B 5 Dec

NC1212114995

[FBIS Editorial Report] The following is a comprehensive review of all items in the 5 December edition of the Arabic language newspaper AL-SHA'B that pertain to political Islamic issues.

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1. Party Leader Laments 'Disgraceful' Elections
2. University Students Protest Election Rigging
3. Columnist Counts His 'Gains' in Elections
4. Writer Demands Presidential Clarification of Election Results
5. Writer Urges 'All-Out Confrontation' To Overthrow Regime
6. 'Dramatic Elections' Lamented
7. Writer Sees Bright Side in Elections
8. Columnist Examines Official Media Performance
9. Party Official Detained Despite Acquittal
10. Report Notes Acquittal of Muslim Brother

PARTY LEADER LAMENTS 'DISGRACEFUL' ELECTIONS

A 1,500-word article by Labor Party Leader Ibrahim Shukri, on pages 1 and 8, states that the elections "showed the government's determination to force the one-party system" on the people. He says that the government "used force and violence... not only to force the success of its candidates through rigging, but also to afflict the masses with frustration and despair of the pluralistic experience and thus make them surrender to the dominance of the one party."

Describing the government's conduct during the elections as "disgraceful," Shukri says that the government "rigged the vote, stole voters' support, killed people who committed no crime..., forged vote registers, and failed to observe equality between the ruling party and opposition parties."

Stating that the "oppressive campaign" targeted everybody and not only the candidates of the Labor Party and the Muslim Brotherhood, he says that the "emergency laws" were used against the "legitimate opposition."

His case stated, Shukri concludes that "forcing pluralism now hangs around the necks of political parties and movements." He adds that it is "our duty to move in an organized and effective manner to force freedoms rather than wait for them to be granted to the people." He underlines the need for "cohesion, using all legitimate peaceful ways, to defeat the National Democratic Party candidates in all the constituencies in which there will be run-off elections."

UNIVERSITY STUDENTS PROTEST ELECTION RIGGING

A 200-word report by 'Abd-al-Hayy Muhammad, on pages 1 and 8, says that over 10,000 students in al-Mansurah University demonstrated on 2 and 3 December to protest the rigging of the People's Assembly elections, the expulsion of 17 students, and the continued detention of 27 students. They shouted slogans demanding the "abrogation of the emergency laws, the release of detained students, and the establishment of a sound democratic life."

COLUMNIST COUNTS HIS 'GAINS' IN ELECTIONS

Muhammad 'Abd-al-Quddus' 600-word column "The Natives," on page 12, describes the parliamentary elections as "an Egyptian tragedy by all standards." The columnist is "almost certain" that the remaining opposition figures will be "disposed of" in the run-off elections to guarantee "a clean" People's Assembly from the regime's point of view.

Counting his "gains" despite what happened, 'Abd-al-Quddus says that he entered the elections under the slogan "Islam is the solution" and stood fast despite the "harassment," abided by the ethical rules dictated by Islam, knew his loyal friends from his enemies, and confirmed his views about the ruling party.

Stating that "beloved Egypt cannot go one step forward under the existing despotic regime," he stresses that "every patriot who loves Egypt must work to build the regime."

WRITER DEMANDS PRESIDENTIAL CLARIFICATION OF ELECTION RESULTS

Chief Editor Majdi Ahmad Husayn addresses a 1,000-word "Open Message to President Mubarak" because he "repeatedly requested an audience with the president and received no response."

In his message, Husayn says that the radio, television, and MENA announced "struggler Ibrahim Shukri's winning" in the parliamentary elections and later changed their story to announce that he was defeated. Referring to a rumor that "there were instructions from higher up not to let Shukri win," he requests a "presidential statement to explain the matter."

He cites other examples, where candidates were announced as winners by the official media and later declared as defeated. He asks the president to clarify whether there were "supreme instructions" to preclude Islamists and opposition candidates from winning.

He wants the president to "interrogate Information Minister Safwat al-Sharif and the MENA director for broadcasting false news."

WRITER URGES 'ALL-OUT CONFRONTATION' TO OVERTHROW REGIME

In a 3,000-word article on page 2, Chief Editor Majdi Ahmad Husayn comments on the recent parliamentary elections. Borrowing a colleague's expression, he describes the elections held on 29 November as "a confrontation between an unarmed people and an armed authority."

"As we got ready for the electoral battle by printing and distributing statements and holding seminars.... the party of the devil was preparing other tools: knives, firearms, detention plans, and stealing of ballot boxes," he says. He points out that the "nationalist powers" were preparing for "a propaganda battle" while the ruling party prepared for "a military battle."

He maintains that the people have no other alternative but "to prepare for an all-out popular confrontation to overthrow the regime," which, according to him "will not cross the threshold of the 21st century."

Majdi Husayn lists "violations" during the electoral battle. He says that 41 were killed and 843 wounded, 19 candidates were assaulted, at least 15,000 polling stations were damaged, eight journalists were attacked while performing their duty, and over 1,000 persons were detained or remanded. He adds that tens of cases were registered where the "hooligans of the National Democratic Party" used firearms.

Pointing out that "totalitarian, one-party regimes are far more honorable than those of false pluralism," he explains that "false pluralism becomes a trap to hunt innocent people without warning."

He says that the state television was "so crazy that it viewed the opposition's failure to win a single seat in the first round of the elections as the biggest evidence of the consolidation of democracy." "They did not even like the tamed opposition. To them, everyone should be disciplined," he says.

Husayn asserts that "their election figures are as falsified and unsound as the figures of their alleged accomplishments."

Addressing the regime, he says: "You have pushed the most moderate people into saying that the only solution is violence." However, he still believes that "the masses will change things" and that "they will overthrow the despotic regime just as they did in communist countries." He expects the "rate of political violence" to increase in the next stage.

He concludes that the masses unanimously agree that the ruling party "stole power" and that it is "an illegitimate party." He affirms that this "unanimity" is necessary for change.

'DRAMATIC ELECTIONS' LAMENTED

A 1,500-word article by Dr. Ni'mat Ahmad Fu'ad, on page 3, laments the "dramatic elections," in which people like Ibrahim Shukri, Dr. Hilmi Nammar, 'Abd-al-Hamid Barakat, Ma'mun al-Hudaybi, and 'Adil Husayn "failed" according to a report AL-AKHBAR published on 1 December.

Recalling an article published in 1927, in which the writer said that Sa'd Zaghlul died while "insignificant" people still lived, she states that "the failure of the descendants of prominent families, the leaders of the opposition parties, and the former president of Cairo University honors these persons and incriminates the government, which elected itself and generated more Egyptian jokes."

"If they had an ounce of intelligence, they would at least let big names win, names whose failure in their own constituencies and strongholds and among their kin and clans would be inconceivable."

She quotes the late Dr. Jamal Hamdan's view that "much despotism is being committed in Egypt in the name of democracy." In Dr. Hamdan's view "the only authority in Egypt is the executive authority; the two others are a parliamentary justification and a legitimizer. The one is a democratic camouflage and the other is a constitutional makeup. The truth is that the government rules everything alone and owns everything."

The writer adds that the government "monopolized the mass media for campaigning before and after meals, although the media belongs to the taxpayers." She wonders why the government needs campaigning "if it does what it wants and if the people believe what they want." She notes that the people are ecstatic listening to a poet like Hafiz Ibrahim talking about Egypt or a singer Like Umm Kulthum singing. "But the Egyptian people feel miserable and suffer when the authority talks about itself and insults their intelligence," she says.

Noting that "great democracies" make no decision without involving the opposition, she states that the government in Egypt "lends a deaf ear to whatever opposition papers say and persists in its injustice." She hopes the opposition "has learned a lesson and made up its mind not to take part in any elections to reveal the facts to the world."

She regrets that this is the "image" Egypt presents to the world, when Israel boasts of being the only democracy in the region. "This is perhaps the only truth Israel voices, in spite of its numerous claims and lies," she says.

WRITER SEES BRIGHT SIDE IN ELECTIONS

Mustafa Mashhur's 2,000-word article on page 5, states that "the government's blatant interference in the elections provides evidence of the power the Muslim Brothers enjoy among the masses." Why else would the government and the police need make such efforts and use such strange methods, he asks.

He notes that the Muslim Brothers encountered "the largest share" of these government practices, which started with arrests of prominent Muslim Brothers followed by a campaign of false accusations and then referral to military courts.

He adds that what happened proved to all that the Muslim Brothers are "abiding by their moderate, peaceful approach and their rejection of violence and extremism." He also notes the public "responsiveness" to the slogan "Islam is the solution" despite the security "harassment" and affirms that the "future is for Islam."

Mashhur commends the wide participation of women in the voting process, although some of them were arrested.

He points out that "falsification" of the elections might prompt some "young zealots" to reject the Muslim Brothers' peaceful approach. But he urges the Muslim Brothers to "stick to their approach," since violent methods will only give the enemies of Islam the chance to call for striking at whoever promotes Islam.

Stating that the People's Assembly is one of the media through which Islam can be promoted, he says, "if we are denied access to this media, we will find many other means to spread our call." He urges the Muslim Brothers to keep up their efforts and to avoid division.

COLUMNIST EXAMINES OFFICIAL MEDIA PERFORMANCE

A 2,000-word article by al-Sayyid al-Ghadban, on page 12, examines the term "media domination" frequently used by leading media figures, who claim that the numerous television, radio, and satellite channels provide "evidence of that domination."

The writer states that the term "domination" contradicts the sound meaning of the message the media should convey. He explains that this message in democratic states is "to secure the flow of truthful news, present them to the public neutrally and objectively, and present a reliable piece of news... to give the masses the opportunity to use their minds and adopt sound decisions and stances on the basis of correct news and information not distorted by omissions, additions, or erroneous comments."

He points out that the media's role is not to dominate the masses by transmitting distorted information, since this is the role of "propaganda." He believes that "the official bodies owned by the ruling regimes" have one and only one goal: "to propagate the regime.... by concealing or distorting news or presenting false news."

Making another point, he states that it is "quality" and not "quantity" that determines the winner in the competition among different media to attract the largest audience. People look for the media that provides them with correct, concise news arranged by order of importance.

Applying this to the Egyptian media, he notes that it "ignores" much local news that interests the public and presents "distorted" news. When it comes to the order of importance, the Egyptian media focuses on state officials' field visits, which have no news value, he says. He notes that television cameras "follow the president's moves in field visits for 30 minutes," although this "has no news value".

He also notes that news correspondents "only report news already reported by news agencies" without presenting an analysis that helps the viewer or listener grasp the real implications of the report.

PARTY OFFICIAL DETAINED DESPITE ACQUITTAL

An unattributed 100-word report on page 1 says that 'Abd-al- Rahman Lutfi, Labor Party secretary in Mallawi, has been moved to an "unknown location," although he was acquitted by a criminal court. The report notes that Lutfi was arrested "over two months ago" without reason.

REPORT NOTES ACQUITTAL OF MUSLIM BROTHER

An unattributed 500-word report, on pages 1 and 8, notes that the court acquitted Engineer 'Abd-al-Wahhab Sharaf-al-Din, secretary general of the engineers association in Suez, of the charge of acting as liaison between the Muslim Brothers and al-Jihad. "This acquittal repeals the last excuse the government has used to accuse the Muslim Brothers of supporting terrorism," the report says.

Palestinian Affairs

'Arafat Receives Cable From Israeli President

JN1212144195 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1400 GMT 12 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] President Yasir 'Arafat has received a cable from Israeli President Ezer Weizman. In his cable, the Israeli president expressed hope that the peace march would continue, that the Oslo accord would be implemented, that the redeployment [of the Israeli forces] would take place in accordance with a specific timetable, and that the Palestinian legislative elections would be held on time.

In his cable, the Israeli president also called for promoting Palestinian-Israeli cooperation to create a better future for peace and security in the region.

'Arafat Says Dialogue With Hamas 'Ongoing'

JN1212153695 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1223 GMT 12 Dec 95

[Report by 'Adil al-Za'nun in Gaza; from the "Today's Events" program]

[FBIS Translated Text] President Yasir 'Arafat is now holding a meeting with members of the German Parliamentary Legal Committee. The two sides will discuss the latest developments of the peace process and the forthcoming legislative elections which will be held for the first time in Palestine. Members of the German Legal Committee were briefed on the situation in the Gaza Strip and on preparations under way for the upcoming legislative elections. The German officials praised the Palestinian experiment and the exercise of democracy in the upcoming elections.

The German officials had earlier met with Minister of Justice Furayh Abu-Midayyn in Gaza.

In another development, President 'Arafat expresses happiness with the Israeli occupation troops' withdrawal from Nablus and the National Authority's [NA] takeover of the city. President 'Arafat noted that contacts are still under way with the Israeli Government in order to implement the Palestinian-Israeli peace agreement accurately and honestly.

Regarding dialogue between the NA and Hamas [Islamic Resistance] Movement, President 'Arafat said: The most important thing is that dialogue with Hamas and opposition factions is ongoing. President 'Arafat asserted that there are continuous contacts with all the Palestinian opposition forces.

In the same context, Dr. Mahmud al-Zahhar, a Hamas official, said dialogue is the optimal way. He said Hamas is keen on reaching an agreement with the NA. He noted that the movement's delegation will leave for Cairo tomorrow and that a meeting bringing together Hamas leaders inside and outside the Palestinian areas will be held in Sudan on 14 December.

Dr. al-Zahhar said that the NA-Hamas meetings will commence in Cairo on 16 December.

'Arafat Releases Hamas Official Abu-Musamih

JN1312071995 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 0600 GMT 13 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] His Excellency President Yasir 'Arafat chaired a National Security Council meeting yesterday and decided to release Hamas [Islamic Resistance] Movement official Shaykh Sayyid Abu-Musamih as a gesture of goodwill and to emphasize that the National Authority is serious about its dialogue with the Hamas Movement.

Al-Tayyib 'Abd-al-Rahim, secretary general of the presidency, and Muhammad Dahlan, official in charge of preventive security, accompanied Abu-Musamih to the home of Hamas official Dr. Mahmud al-Zahhar.

'Arafat Aide: 'Harsh Measures' Used Against Hamas

MS1312100695 London THE DAILY TELEGRAPH in English 13 Dec 95 p 17

[Report by Gerald Butt: "Hamas Threat at an End, Says Senior 'Arafat Aide"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Violence by the militant Islamic group Hamas "has practically ended", according to a senior adviser of Yasir 'Arafat, the chairman of the Palestine Liberation Organisation, writes Gerald Butt.

Nabil Sha'th, a former PLO negotiator with Israel and a minister in the Palestine National Authority, said popular support for Hamas in Gaza and the West Bank had fallen away sharply.

While 40 per cent of Palestinians had backed the fundamentalist group two years ago, it now had no more than 15 per cent support.

Mr Sha'th admitted to an audience at the Royal United Services Institute in London yesterday that the Palestinian authorities had used "harsh security measures" against Hamas to prevent it wrecking moves towards peace.

Since then, Mr Sha'th said, Palestinians had been impressed by the rapid progress to peace and had turned away from Hamas.

Hamas Asks To Consult Leaders Abroad Before Dialogue

NC1312094695 Cairo MENA in Arabic 0720 GMT 13 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 13 Dec (MENA) — AL-AHRAM reports today that members of the Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] delegation who met with Palestinian President Yasir 'Arafat the day before yesterday asked for some time before holding the reconciliation dialogue with the Palestinian Authority [PA] so as to consult with their leaders.

Palestine's Ambassador in Cairo Zuhdi al-Qidrah stated that a Hamas delegation will travel to Sudan and Jordan for that purpose and that the date for the dialogue will be set following their return from these talks.

On whether there are differences over the venue for the dialogue, al-Qidrah said: We asked President Husni Mubarak one month ago to host the dialogue in Egypt. His excellency agreed and expressed hope that the dialogue will be held as soon as possible in Cairo. He added: We are ready for constructive dialogue. Our hearts are open to discuss common concerns. As soon as Hamas agrees, we will notify the interior and foreign ministries so as to take the appropriate measures.

Hamas Spokesman Ibrahim Ghawshah said yesterday that no date has been set for holding the reconciliation dialogue in Cairo between Hamas and the PLO. He added: The PLO tried to pressure us to hold the meeting yesterday, Tuesday, and used political tactics to make us agree on this date. But Hamas adhered to its stand and called on the PLO to abide by the mechanisms of the dialogue proposed by Hamas, which concern the timing, and then the date for the dialogue will be set. But Ghawshah refused to give any details about the mechanisms for dialogue.

Regarding Israel's implementation of the Oslo agreement it signed with the PA and its commitment to withdraw from Palestinian cities, Amb. al-Qidrah said: Commitment to the dates set for the withdrawal will propel the peace process forward and give the Israeli pledges credibility. This commitment is also bound to strengthen the Palestinian people's hopes. We hope that redeployment will be completed by the end of this month.

The Palestinian ambassador in Cairo concluded his statement by saying: The Palestinian people in particular and the Arab and Islamic ones in general will be very happy to celebrate Christmas for the first time in liberated Bethlehem this year. We hope to start negotiations on the final stage at the beginning of next year.

On the other hand, AL-AHRAM cites its correspondent in Gaza as reporting that the Hamas delegation members will leave Gaza for Khartoum today through Egypt to meet with the Hamas leaders abroad in preparation for starting the dialogue with the PA in Egypt on Saturday [16 December].

The AL-AHRAM correspondent learned that the meeting will be held outside Cairo. Zalim al-Za'nun, acting Palestine National Council chairman who will head the PA delegation to the dialogue with Hamas, said that Palestinian President 'Arafat will attend the final stages of the dialogue. He noted that the two sides will focus on the attempt to agree on a strategy that regulates their relations and on the national constants so as to prevent any friction that will negatively affect the Palestinian people's march. He added that the PA will urge Hamas to participate in the Palestinian elections slated to be held in January 1966.

Hamas Breaks With AL-WATAN, Dismisses Editor

NC1212172995 Paris AFP in English 1624 GMT 12 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Gaza City, Gaza Strip, Dec 12 (AFP) — The Palestinian Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas) announced Tuesday [12 December] that it had dismissed the editor of its official weekly newspaper AL-WATAN for "failing to follow instructions."

In a tract distributed in the Palestinian territories, Hamas also said that AL-WATAN would no longer serve as its official mouthpiece.

"The leadership of Hamas in the Gaza Strip has decided to dismiss 'Imad al-Faluji from all its bodies," it said.

The tract said that AL-WATAN, which is published here, "is no longer the official organ of Hamas and has no relation with the movement."

Al-Faluji, 33, was named by Palestine Liberation Organization chief Yasir 'Arafat to lead a "national dialogue" with movements like Hamas which are opposed to his agreements with Israel on autonomy in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank.

Al-Faluji has also announced he would run as an Islamic independent candidate in elections to a Palestinian self-rule council due to be held on January 20 and which are opposed by Hamas.

In another leaflet distributed in Damascus, Hamas said al-Faluji was sacked for "failing to follow instructions from the movement."

"Al-Faluji has made statements in the name of the movement which do not reflect its positions," it said without elaborating.

In a statement, al-Faluji responded that he was suspending publication of AL-WATAN and the weekly would reappear "as soon as possible" in a new form.

'Arafat said Monday he would meet with Hamas leaders in Cairo on Saturday, but a Hamas spokesman in Amman said Tuesday that the movement would not go until it had an official invitation from Egypt.

Quray' on Jerusalem, Final Status Negotiations

JN1212120295 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 0535 GMT 12 Dec 95

[Telephone interview with Minister of Economy Ahmad Quray' by Fathi al-Barqawi in Jericho; from the "A New Day" news feature — live]

[FBIS Translated Text] [al-Barqawi] Brother Abu-'Ala' [Ahmad Quray'], good morning.

[Quray'] Good morning to you.

[Al-Barqawi] Israel banned a UN sponsored seminar from convening in Jerusalem. How can one describe this behavior?

[Quray'] Before anything else, I would like to voice great surprise at Israel's insistence on imposing the fait accompli policy in Jerusalem and around it, thus ignoring all the agreements that were signed with it and the international legitimacy resolutions. Israel should understand one reality, that Jerusalem is one of the issues to be discussed in the final status negotiations. We still have six months to go before starting the final status negotiations. The Declaration of Principles signed in Oslo tackled Jerusalem. Israel must realize that East Jerusalem is an inseparable part of the West Bank and is part of the Arab territories that were occupied in 1967, and that no matter what realities it establishes on the ground and no matter how it tries to change the features of this area, Jerusalem will remain part of the occupied Arab territories, and Israel cannot win one particle of its soil. This is one fact. Another fact is that Israel should realize that we will open the file of West Jerusalem too, and not only that of East Jerusalem.

It is illogical for a police force to prevent a meeting from being held and to erect roadblocks on the roads to check those entering or leaving Jerusalem. It is also illogical that Israel pursues unacceptable policies. All this cannot lead to real peace with the Palestinians and is an unacceptable policy, particularly in light of the fact that Israel continues to confiscate land and to open bypass roads. Of what use is bypass road no. 1 from al-Musrarah to Bayt Hanina? Why does this road and the road from Bethlehem to Jerusalem from the east exist? Why does Israel try to impose all these hypass roads? Israel must understand that all this will not change the facts, and that Palestinian rights will not be harmed. Israel should understand this very well.

A conference was slated to be held in the Notre Dame under the auspices of UNIDO [United Nations Industrial Development Organization] to discuss the industrial situation in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. It was said that UNIDO under Abu-'Ala' auspices extended invitations to this meeting. The truth is that I did not go to that meeting, and I did not intend to go. My brothers contacted me, informing me that the Israeli police forces besieged the place and banned entrance to it. This forced the UN representatives to leave the place.

This policy does not serve the peace process and cannot create an atmosphere of peace.

[Al-Barqawi] Brother Abu-'Ala', you said that the agreements signed with Israel allow us to hold seminars in Jerusalem. Is this clear in the agreements?

[Quray'] In reality, there are no provisions allowing or preventing such seminars. Jerusalem is part of the occupied Palestinian territories. Jerusalem is part of Resolution 242 which tackles the occupied territories. Thus, there are no provisions saying seminars can be held or not. There is only a frame of mind. The Israeli officials have become accustomed to creating such a frame of mind which they cannot leave behind later, therefore, they clash with Israeli public opinion. Israeli leaders have made the Israelis believe that the West Bank is Judaea and Samaria which they will never give up. They started to leave them now, and they will not keep one centimeter of this land. The same operation applies to Jerusalem. They will inevitably have to leave Jerusalem.

[Al-Barqawi] This is the sound approach. Brother Abu-'Ala', you said something we cannot ignore. You said that Israel must understand that we will open the West Jerusalem file?

[Quray'] Yes, all of Jerusalem. The Oslo agreement... [pauses] Go back to the Declaration of Principles. We must realize that discussion of the Jerusalem issue has been postponed. There is East Jerusalem, and there is West Jerusalem. East Jerusalem is part of the occupied territories. West Jerusalem was previously occupied. Therefore, the entire file will be opened. This is how the issue will be dealt with.

What relationship will there be between East and West Jerusalem? We will decide on this. These are the issues. I believe that the Jerusalem file should be discussed now and not tomorrow as long as Israel acts with this mentality. It is impermissible for the Israelis to employ public opinion and the elections in a wrong manner to try to impose facts and realities on the ground.

[Al-Barqawi] Israel banned a UNIDO seminar yesterday. Will this prevent other Palestinian meetings from taking place in the future?

[Quray'] Normally, this should not be the case. The director general of the Israeli ministry of internal security called me today and asked for a meeting. I asked him why he asks for a meeting if they act on the basis of the fait accompli. This does not help settle issues. I said to him: had you asked for a meeting before this, it would have been good, but to try to forcefully and in a very bad manner impose a fait accompli is unacceptable.

[Al-Barqawi] Usually, is there coordination with the Israeli occupation or other quarters on such matters as seminars or other things?

[Quray'] This is impermissible. Israel adopts a whimsical approach. Two weeks ago, I attended a seminar in Jerusalem. They may change their mind two weeks later. This a whimsical approach.

[Al-Barqawi] I also remember a seminar for Jordanian businessmen?

[Quray'] Yes, yes. These are issues governed by whims. Deep down, they realize [pauses]. We must say it frankly. Israel now realizes that it will have to leave Jerusalem. It is impossible for it to remain there. But, the question is how long will they remain captive to an erroneous stand, a stand they themselves are not convinced with. The same applies to the Golan. They annexed it and said it is part of Israel. They will not remain on any inch of the Golan and they will leave every centimeter of Jerusalem.

[Al-Barqawi] As an example of the whimsical behavior of Israel, we discovered only yesterday that Israel bans papers and publications from entering Palestine?

[Quray'] Yes. There are still restrictions on the entrance of Arab papers to Palestine. This is an example of the whimsical approach. Israel still has the mentality of the occupier. Some of the Israelis want to rid themselves of this mentality. Unfortunately, the majority is still overwhelmed by this mentality, therefore, this mentality dictates their behavior. They decide to arrest this or that person, to impose a closure on this or that city and on the West Bank. This is the mentality of the occupier. Israel tries to rid itself of this mentality, but there are some who cling to this mentality and are not able to rid themselves of it. They need some time, but ultimately they will become convinced that all that they are doing is wrong, and that they will pay a prohibitive price for their attempt to impose the fait accompli.

[Al-Barqawi] Brother Abu-'Ala', let me sum up all that you have said. The Israeli measure is not in line with the spirit of the Palestinian-Israeli Declaration of Principles which stipulates that no changes should be made to the Arab character of the holy city until the final status negotiations?

[Quray'] This is true. Issues having to do with Jerusalem cannot be unilaterally decided. All that Israel carries out in Jerusalem is an attempt to kill Jerusalem. Let me give you an example. Look at the businessmen, the shops, and the merchants in Jerusalem. Historically, Jerusalem thrives on the villages around it and these villages thrive on it. This equation is very clear and understood by every Palestinian and every citizen in Jerusalem or around it. As a result of the incessant closure operations and the impossibility of the villages around Jerusalem to make contact with it, these businessmen now cannot market their products and increase their sales. Neither the Israeli citizen nor those from the villages around Jerusalem can come to Jerusalem to buy from these merchants. Thus, Israel seeks to stifle the businessmen. We should take care of all this.

[Al-Barqawi] The conflict is still raging in one way or another. Brother Abu-'Ala', good morning to you.

Fatah Leader on Wariness Over Israeli Pullout

MS1312095395 London INDEPENDENT in English 13 Dec 95 p 17

[Report by Patrick Cockburn: "Arabs Rejoice as Israelis Pull Out"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Nablus — "Everybody was caught by surprise," says Husam Khadr, one of Palestinian leaders in Nablus, as he describes the final moments of the Israeli withdrawal from his city. The Israeli forces pulled out 24 hours early, apparently in the hope of preventing last-minute clashes with local Palestinian stone throwers.

It was a plan which almost came disastrously unstuck. Israeli radio prematurely announced late on Monday evening that its troops were pulling out that night. "Some of our boys went down to the military headquarters looking for a fight," said Mr Khadr. "There were still about 50 Israeli border guards. I called all my friends to tell our people with guns to go there and get them out. We escorted them to the nearest Israeli checkpoint." By yesterday morning the 1,200 police of the Palestinian Authority were fully in control. They are, in fact, not police, but combat soldiers armed with assault rifles and in full military uniform. Units in green berets were carrying mattresses into the old Israeli headquarters, housed in a large dirty cream building. Apart from an old wooden chair on which a bored soldier had carved his name in Hebrew, the building was scraped clean. Even the washing bowls in the lavatory were smashed and somebody had defecated on the floor.

The Israeli withdrawal from Nablus, the largest city on the West Bank with a population of 130,000, is the critical moment in implementation of the Oslo accords. In Jerusalem a senior Israeli official said: "We can never go back in." The escalation of violence by the Israeli extreme right, which culminated in the assassination of Yitzhaq Rabin, the prime minister, on 4 November, came because they believed the pullout from cities like Nablus made a Palestinian state inevitable.

In a villa built into the side of the mountain overlooking Nablus, Mahmoud 'Allul, the new Palestinian governor, complains that the departing Israelis "destroyed the telephone lines and electricity supply in their headquarters". He cannot move in until they are repaired. Born in Nablus, he was jailed for four years in 1967, a few months after Israel captured the city in the Six Day War. He was then deported for 24 years, but helped organise the intifada in the city from abroad. Two months ago he came back.

The mood of Palestinian leaders in the city swings between exhilaration at being in control and wariness about the extent of their gains, since Israeli forces still surround Nablus. Nevertheless, Sami Musallam, head of the office in Jericho of Yasir 'Arafat, the PLO chairman, looked quietly triumphant as Palestinian troops escorted him through the gates of Jneid prison, which used to hold between 850 and 1,000 prisoners. He said: "Some people want to use it once again as a hospital but I think it should turn it into a museum. This is where our freedom fighters were held and tortured."

Mr Khadr, 34, is the leader of Fatah, the main Palestinian political organisation, among the 16,000 people in Balata refugee camp, just south of Nablus. "People believe within the constraints of the Oslo agreement because they are seeing some results on the ground," he said. "But this is not enough, because we have only a little bit of our lands." The refugees in Balata, who fled from Jaffa and Lod in Israel in 1948, are disappointed that Oslo does not do anything to win them back their homes. Fatah activists like Mr Khadr are also angry that Mr 'Arafat is preferring notable families and PLO politicians from abroad in the election to the 82-member Palestinian Council, which is to be held on 20 January.

There were few signs of these doubts on the streets of Nablus yesterday. Despite drenching rain and the crash of Israeli jets breaking the sound barrier overhead, most of the population was celebrating. People brought their children to look at the deserted rooms of the military headquarters and central police stations, both now decorated with Palestinian flags. After expressing his reservations about the partial nature of the Israeli withdrawal and the lack of democracy in Fatah, Mr Khadr, a hardened intifada leader, said: "I cried when I saw the Israelis leave, because freedom is freedom."

Fatah Leader on Israeli Withdrawal From Nabulus

MS1312101595 London THE DAILY TELEGRAPH in English 13 Dec 95 p 17

[Report by Anton La Guardia: "West Bank 'Enforcer' Pays the Price of Peace"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The triumphant entry of Palestinian security forces into Nabulus yesterday ended Ahmad Tabuq's reign as arbitrary "moral enforcer" in the West Bank's largest town.

In the months between the departure of the Israelis and the arrival of the Palestinian Authority, the few dozen armed "Fatah Hawks" led by Tabuq dispensed rough justice to alleged drug dealers, rapists, thieves and collaborators.

Tabuq, 31, speaking in a safe house in the casbah, said his group had executed two collaborators, killed a third person in an unexplained gunfight, and shot dozens of minor suspects in the legs in the past year.

As the only source of authority in Nabulus, he elicited a mixture of fear and admiration in its 130,000 inhabitants.

He was rumoured to have been killed last week, but when he turned up in the main square to show he was alive, firing his gun, he was cheered by thousands.

Tabuq nominally pledges allegiance to Yasir 'Arafat's dominant Fatah faction of the Palestine Liberation Organisation, but he has been beyond Fatah's political control. His actions have unnerved Nablus's traditional business clans, whose money will be essential to economic reconstruction.

Mr 'Arafat now needs stability to start building the promised Palestinian state. His senior advisers said Tabuq would be disarmed and arrested once the Palestinian Authority assumed full control of Nabulus.

It seems more likely that Mr 'Arafat will adopt the "bear-hug" method of restraint — enrolling the gunmen into his police, as he has done with armed activists in the Gaza Strip and other parts of the West Bank.

"We are not criminals that have to be arrested," said Tabuq.

"We worked against the dishonest people, to clean up the place. There is no law here, and we are the closest you get. No honest, struggling person gives a damn if 100 collaborators are killed."

Tabuq, a poor and uneducated father of three, was reared in the intifada, the mass uprising against Israeli rule. He has spent 10 years in jail for security offences. When Mr 'Arafat signed the Israeli-Palestinian autonomy accords in 1993, Tabuq and his gang were stranded.

"The streets were controled by the poor and lower middle-class," said Khalil al-Shaqaqi, head of the Centre for Palestine Research and Studies in Nabulus.

"With the end of the occupation, the old, wealthy elite which had been marginalised is being reintegrated. Fatah people feel they are losing control to people they hate."

Tabuq was nervous this week. "The last days are the most dangerous," he said. "When the Israelis were leaving Gaza, they killed eight Fatah Hawks. Even after the Authority comes, there might still be collaborators among us."

He brightened when kneecappings in Belfast were mentioned. "Do they also do it in Ireland? Really? I never knew that." Suddenly, his world seemed less lonely.

PLO Cadres Permitted To Cross Into Territories

JN1312120695 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1000 GMT 13 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] 'Umar al-Khatib, Palestinian ambassador to Jordan, stated that the National Authority [NA] obtained permission to bring in 2,500 PLO cadres and military officials into the Palestinian territories. Al-Khatib said that these officers will be responsible for safeguarding security and maintaining order in the West Bank following the NA's assumption of civilian and security powers in the Palestinian cities.

Al-Khatib denied that there are attempts to dissolve the Palestinian Liberation Army. He said what the NA is doing is to search for how to bring in the soldiers and officers to the homeland in agreement with the Israeli side.

Radio Interviews Leader of New Islamic Front

JN1312115295 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 0520 GMT 13 Dec 95

[Telephone interview with PIF Secretary General Shaykh Salih 'Abd-al-'Al, in Algiers, by correspondent Fathi al-Barqawi in Jericho; from the "A New Day" news feature — live]

[FBIS Translated Text] [al-Barqawi] Shaykh Salih 'Abd-al-'Al, good morning.

['Abd-al-'Al] Welcome.

[Al-Barqawi] We received a statement you sent us through the fax last night in your capacity as secretary general of the Palestinian Islamic Front [Al-Jabhah al-Islamiyah al-Filastiniyah]. Can you brief us on this front?

['Abd-al-'Al] The establishment of the Palestinian Islamic Front [PIF] was officially announced at a news conference in Gaza on 25 August of this year. As its name indicates, the PIF's Islamic platform basically deals with the Palestinian cause and the Palestinian file.

[Al-Barqawi] Why are you now in the Algerian capital. Were you, for example, deported by the Israeli occupation authorities?

['Abd-al-'Al] I am being pursued.

[Al-Barqawi] You are being pursued? Is there any intention to return?

['Abd-al-'Al] There is no doubt about this. There is a sincere wish to return.

[Al-Barqawi] God willing, we will make your acquaintance here in the homeland. Does the PIF have anything to do with the Hamas [Islamic Resistance] Movement command?

['Abd-al-'Al] There is no organizational relationship, and it is evident that our viewpoints differ from theirs as well as the political approach we adopt with respect to the nature of political action at this stage.

[Al-Barqawi] You are aware that contacts are under way between the National Authority [NA] and the Hamas Movement?

['Abd-al-'Al] Yes.

[Al-Barqawi] Perhaps you do not know that Shaykh Abu-Musamih was released last night?

['Abd-al-'Al] This is good.

[Al-Barqawi] What do you have to say to this NA step?

['Abd-al-'Al] This is a good step and we value it. We hope it will further improve relations between the brothers in Hamas and the Palestinian National Authority. This will consolidate the Palestinian people's unity as a first step to the institutionalization of the Palestinian political presence on Palestinian soil at this important stage of our people's struggle.

[Al-Barqawi] Can the relationship between the NA and Hamas reach the point of having Hamas participate in the elections?

['Abd-al-'Al] We believe that the brothers in Hamas are currently discussing how to act after clashes have proven how futile intra-Palestinian fighting is and how it does not serve any of the two parties, therefore, it is not far-fetched that the Hamas brothers would move toward the option of participation in the elections if they secure some guarantees in this respect.

[Al-Barqawi] Does the PIF intend to participate in the elections?

['Abd-al-'Al] We support the elections but the question of participating or not is purely a technical issue which has to do with our state of affairs within the PIF.

[Al-Barqawi] Let me frankly ask you the following. What is the size of the PIF here in the arena?

['Abd-al-'Al] The PIF can be found in all the cities and camps of the Gaza Strip. It also has a presence in the main cities and many villages of the West Bank. The PIF is made up of groups of Muslim youths who had worked in this or that Islamic movement, or of groups which had been active within the Palestinian national movement. We want to distance ourselves from demagoguery at this stage which calls on us to conduct more serious and quiet action.

We are careful to have a serious and realistic Islamic platform that will contribute to this Palestinian march. We are certain that the entire Palestinian people are committed to an Islamic and Arab culture, and we move within this large environment. Our size depends on the concepts we uphold at this important stage.

[Al-Barqawi] I would like to ask a question. Has the NA granted you a license to carry out political action?

['Abd-al-'Al] Yes, we have a license.

[Al-Barqawi] Since when have you had such a license?

['Abd-al-'Al] We got a verbal permission from his excellency the president before 25 August. We completed our file and submitted it to the Palestinian Interior Ministry. God willing, the official license will be given to us soon.

[Al-Barqawi] Shaykh 'Abd-al-'Al, you know that there is more than one Islamic front. What sets you apart from the others, particularly from Hamas?

['Abd-al-'Al] First of all, there are many issues which make it easy to note the difference. The first point is that the brothers in Hamas are part of a general state of affairs called the International Muslim Brotherhood Movement. With due respect to all, we did not want our platform to be based on that of others. Our Islamic platform stems from Palestine, from the uniqueness of the Palestinian experience. The second point is that we are aware that our people experience one of the most intricate and difficult stages in their history, therefore, instead of wasting efforts squabbling over what should take place at this stage, we should, wholeheartedly, join in building the institutions of this Palestinian presence which is one of the most important achievements scored by the Palestinian people, irrespective of the stand on a peace settlement or anything else. We and the brothers in Hamas do meet over a general view of Islam but there is clear separation on the level of affiliation and political platform.

[Al-Barqawi] Shaykh Salih 'Abd-al-'Al, secretary general of the PIF, thank you.

New Islamic Daily Paper AL-KHALAS Approved

JN1212134095 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1100 GMT 12 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] His Excellency President Yasir 'Arafat endorsed a decision to issue AL-KHALAS [Salvation] newspaper, the mouthpiece of the Islamic National Salvation Party [Hizb al-Khalas al-Watani al-Islami].

The license to issue the paper was given at a meeting the president had with a delegation representing the party.

The daily newspaper used to be issued as a weekly.

Curfew Imposed on Hebron Area

JN1312090295 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 0600 GMT 13 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] The Israeli forces of occupation imposed a curfew on the Bab-al-Zawiyah area in Hebron this morning. A hand grenade was thrown at the fixed military roadblock in the quarter yesterday but caused no casualties.

Algeria

Car Bomb Exlodes in Algiers Suburb

LD1212182495 Algiers Radio Algiers Network in French 1800 GMT 12 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] We have just received a statement from the security services saying that a booby-trapped vehicle exploded this afternoon at around 1735 [1635 GMT] at Ain Naadja, in the suburbs of Algiers. According to preliminary reports eight people were killed and 35 others were injured in the blast. The booby-trapped car was parked near a cafe.

Radio Confirms 14 Killed

LD1212202495 Algiers Radio Algiers Network in Arabic 2000 GMT 12 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Fourteen people were killed and 41 others injured, including 14 children. This is the final toll of the explosion which took place this afternoon near one of the cafes of Ain Naadja, in Algiers. The interior and health ministers went to the scene of the explosion to enquire about the situation and the rescue operations.

FIS Aide on Kebir Letter, GIA, Other Issues

MM1112153995 London AL-HAYAH in Arabic 9 Dec 95 p 6

[Interview with Abdallah Anas, FIS Executive Committee member, by Kamil al-Tawil in London; date not given]

[FBIS Translated Text] [al-Tawil] Could you shed some light on the uproar caused in Islamic Salvation Front [FIS] circles by Shaykh Rabah Kebir's letter to President Liamine Zeroual?

[Anas] The letter was neither from Shaykh Rabah Kebir, nor from the Executive Committee. The letter was signed by Shaykh Rabah on instructions from inside [Algeria], which means that it was not the Executive Committee that was behind it. The letter came from inside and Rabah just had to sign it, on instructions from inside. There are two elements in the letter: The dialogue and the timing. With regard to the dialogue, the letter contains nothing new, since this (the dialogue) was requested by the shaykhs led by Shaykh Abassi Madani. Therefore the issue of dialogue with the regime predates the letter. However, what is unclear is the timing for sending the letter at this stage.

[Al-Tawil] There was not just disagreement over the timing. Some criticism was aimed at the way President Zeroual was addressed, which suggests that the FIS has accepted the outcome of the elections, despite the fact that it rejects them.

[Anas] Yes, this has caused some misunderstanding in some quarters and raised questions about how the FIS' tone changed in 24 hours.

[Al-Tawil] Do you agree with the view that the letter is an admission that the FIS has lost the battle?

[Anas] The contest in the Algerian elections was between two plans. A secular plan represented by (Dr.) Said Sadi and the eradicationists, and the Islamic plan represented by (Shaykh) Mahfoud Nahnah in the absence of the FIS, the real Islamic force. The 25-percent share of the vote obtained by Nahnah shows the Islamic plan's superiority over the secular plan, despite the absence of a representative of the Islamic plan (FIS). President Zeroual, on the other hand, did not stand for a plan or an idea. The people elected Zeroual as a solution to the crisis, because they could see that he had the media, military, and financial resources and that perhaps, under the circumstances, he is the best suited to conduct negotiations with the FIS. The people's choice of Zeroual does not mean that a plan other than the Islamic plan was chosen.

[Al-Tawil] Do you think that the FIS could return to political action, and if so, what name would it take?

[Anas] I believe that the nation does not put its trust in names, but in men. It was men who moved the Algerian people before becoming the FIS. They are the ones, God willing, who will be able to move the Algerian people, even under a cover that would not be called the FIS. The people put their trust in the men and the plan, regardless of the name. I do not know why the regime insists on changing the FIS' name. If the FIS shaykhs and the Islamic plan are still the same, why insist on changing the name? In any case, changing the FIS' name is premature.

[Al-Tawil] Let us go back to Shaykh Rabah's letter. Would it be possible to know who was behind it and who was consulted before it was sent?

[Anas] When he consulted us Shaykh Rabah said that he had received instructions from brother Ali Djedi and brother Abdelkader Boukhamkham who had consulted the people inside and all were in agreement. Some consultations also took place outside Algeria.

[Al-Tawil] You made a conciliatory gesture toward President Zeroual. What is required of him now?

[Anas] What is required of him is that he prove that he is worthy of the people's trust. The people elected him to promote good and counteract evil, and therefore he is responsible for putting matters back on track. One of the measures needed is to release the shaykhs, close the detention centers, and restore freedom to the FIS to consult with its members inside and abroad. We consider these to be good will gestures.

[Al-Tawil] Are we to understand then that the FIS is now willing to negotiate with the government from behind bars and does not set as a condition the release of its leaders?

[Anas] The FIS has not backtracked, and its conditions for negotiation are still based on being granted the freedom and the ability to meet with all its officials.

[Al-Tawil] Do you intend to cooperate with Shaykh Nahnah as the representative of the Islamic tendency, in view of what transpired from the elections?

[Anas] In what respect?

[Al-Tawil] With regard to the issue of restoring peace to the country.

[Anas] The return of peace to the country is a topical issue, and we would help anyone who contributes to restoring stability in the country.

[Al-Tawil] Would you agree that the National Covenant is now fragmented?

[Anas] The National Covenant is a political initiative and not a plan for Algeria's future. It is a group of elements with contradictory agendas: the Islamic plan's proponents and the advocates of other plans. The Covenant was only a political achievement at a time when the regime was saying that the FIS is intransigent, that it does not want to resolve the conflict peacefully, and that it is a terrorist organization. The Rome conference was organized at the time to refute the accusations against the FIS, and this was as far as its role went. The Covenant did not mean that its signatories had to renounce their plans. The FIS' plan is the Islamic plan and there were some parties in the Covenant which openly opposed this plan.

[Al-Tawil] Is the Covenant still a useful plan to solve the crisis?

[Anas] Despite being weakened, it is still recognized by some parties.

[Al-Tawil] Have the Covenant and its elements not been superseded by events?

[Anas] It is true that it is clearly no longer as strong as it was. This was apparent in many instances such as the time — considered a violation of the Covenant — when Ahmed Ben Mohamed declared his candidacy in the presidential elections.

[Al-Tawil] What is the FIS' position with regard to the legislative elections, in view of the fact that Shaykh Abdallah Djaballah (al-Nahdah) said that the opposition would participate in them?

[Anas] This will be determined by the next phase and what political detente there may be. It is premature to talk about this issue. Things have not changed. President Zeroual still threatens to eliminate terrorism and he means what he says.

[Al-Tawil] To whom does the word terrorism refer?

[Anas] The armed groups. The eradicationist talk is still there, and therefore, under these circumstances, we cannot define our position with regard to the next phase.

[Al-Tawil] Reports from Algeria indicate that, to a large extent, the security forces have won the battle. How do you assess the situation?

[Anas] We have heard, through the media, that the Algerian Government was able to control the election process. We respond by saying that to win a battle is not to win the war. The regime is well established and should not find it difficult to provide the security environment for four or five days, especially given that it controls the funds, the arms, and the media. Does this, however, mean that it has eliminated the armed groups? The answer is no, as proved by what happened after the elections: A general and a colonel were killed, and there were many other operations. Therefore it is incorrect to say that it is in control. The regime cannot eliminate the armed groups. And we believe that, militarily, the armed groups cannot control the situation with the regime. The issue is about a trade-off, and neither side can eliminate the other by force.

[Al-Tawil] Can you define the FIS' position with regard to the Armed Islamic Group [GIA]?

[Anas] The FIS' position toward the GIA is exactly like the GIA's declared position toward the FIS.

[Al-Tawil] Do you believe that the GIA is directly responsible for Shaykh Abdelbaki Sahraoui's assassination, especially given that a statement decreed his assassination along with that of several FIS officials including yourself?

[Anas] As far as the Executive Committee is concerned we do not know exactly who carried out Shaykh Sahraoui's assassination. We do, however, hold the GIA responsible for his assassination because of the statement it issued. In view of the fact that the assassination followed that statement, the responsibility falls squarely on the GIA. However, what makes one hesitate to take the statement into account is the fact that it mentions Anouar Haddam (among those whose blood is to be shed with impunity). How could Shaykh Mohamed

Said, one of the GIA leaders, agree to shed Anouar's blood when he obeys his orders and represents him? And how could Shaykh Said Makhloufi, who is now considered one of the GIA's men, also approve of the statement? How could Makhloufi, for example agree to decree the killing of Kamreddine (Karbani), who left at his bidding to cover activities abroad?

[Al-Tawil] If the decree was incorrect, why was it not denied by the two Shaykhs Said and Makhloufi?

[Anas] That is why I find this puzzling. Is it logical for Makhloufi to condemn Kamreddine to die? And is it logical for Mohamed Said to condemn Haddam to die?

[Al-Tawil] What about the bombings in France and the fact that the GIA, in a statement made on its behalf, has claimed responsibility?

[Anas] They may have claimed responsibility on the basis of information they possess.

[Al-Tawil] Would you approve of transferring the battle to France?

[Anas] Never. We do not approve of transferring a conflict outside its borders. I participated in the Afghan jihad which lasted 14 years and during all that time the battle was not transferred to outside Afghanistan, not to Pakistan or anywhere else in the world. Therefore no diplomat of the Kabul regime was harmed. The battle was inside Afghanistan and did not spill beyond its borders. I support this line. As long as the problem is with a specific side (the Algerian Government), let the battle remain inside. However, we must admit that there have been some French provocations and some elements would find reasons to justify transferring the battle outside the country. Nonetheless, I do not support this view, but at the same time I do not think that those who want to transfer the battle abroad should be given the excuses to do it.

HAMAS Denounces Suspension of LIBERTE

LD1212133395 Algiers Radio Algiers Network in Arabic 1200 GMT 12 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Following the suspension of the daily LIBERTE and the arrest of its chief editor, the Islamic Society Movement, HAMAS, has denounced this action and regarded it as being in violation of the rule of law. HAMAS called on the supervisory authorities to enable the law to take its course, free from being abused by anybody especially since the suspension of the newspaper and its proprietors coincided with the anniversary of the International Declaration of Human Rights. [passage omitted]

Egypt

UN Approves Nation's Nuclear Resolution

NC1312085595 Cairo MENA in English 2313 GMT 12 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] New York, Dec 12 — (MENA) — The UN General Assembly urged all the parties directly concerned in the Middle East to seriously consider whatever prompt and practical measures to implement the proposal calling for the establishment of a nukes-free zone in the Middle East. The resolution, presented by Egypt and ratified by the Assembly today, called upon the countries concerned to join the Nuclear Arms Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). The resolution stressed the importance of bilateral peace negotiations in the Middle East as well as activities of the team operating in the multilateral talks for arms control in the Mideast. It also called upon all countries of the region to declare their support for the establishment of the nuclear arms-free zone in accordance with Article 62-D of the final document of the 10th extraordinary General Assembly session and to lodge these declarations with the Security Council.

Mubarak Addresses NDP Parliamentary Body

NC1212152395 Cairo Arab Republic of Egypt Radio Network in Arabic 1248 GMT 12 Dec 95

[Statement by Information Minister Safwat al-Sharif on President Mubarak's meeting with the NDP Parliamentary Body in Cairo on 12 December — recorded]

[FBIS Translated Text] The Parliamentary Body of the National Democratic Party [NDP] agreed to nominate Dr. Fathi Surur as speaker of the People's Assembly and Mr. Rashid and Mr. Hammadi as deputy speakers for a one year parliamentary session, in accordance with regulations.

At a meeting held under his chairmanship, President Mubarak noted that he will leave it to the People's Assembly committees to choose and nominate the chairmen, deputy chairmen, and secretaries of the committees. He noted that it is important to effect a relative change in the chairmanship and membership of the committees to give the new blood a chance to offer and contribute on the national level.

President Mubarak answered several questions by People's Assembly members from the NDP Parliamentary Body. On some newspaper's claims that the United States has demanded an investigation be opened into the so-called irregularities and excesses that occurred during the recent People's Assembly elections, President Mubarak denied that Egypt has received any request from any state for an investigation of the elections. He emphasized that all reports to this effect are groundless. President Mubarak denounced the demand by some parties for the formation of election monitoring committees. He said Egypt has reached an age of maturity. Egypt, which has a population of 60 million, has the best scientists, university professors, and intellectuals. With its history and the struggle of its sons and their democratic history, Egypt does not accept any interference in its affairs. The Egyptian people have never accepted any foreign custodianship or supervision.

President Mubarak said: The United States has not demanded any investigation whatsoever. No other state has made such a request directly or indirectly. President Mubarak explained that Egypt is an independent and sovereign state. He said: I personally as Egyptian president and an Egyptian citizen do not accept this under any name or circumstance. We are a country with a history. Egypt is not a forgotten or insignificant state. It is an ancient country with a long history.

On the phenomenon of violence, the president explained that violence was and still is a manifestation of rivalry. If the recent elections witnessed regrettable incidents, remember there was violence before the 1952 revolution.

President Mubarak noted that some newspapers fueled this rivalry by their wrong treatment of the elections. This has aroused the zeal of some masses. Violence did not come from the NDP but from all the parties that participated in the election process.

President Mubarak regretted that misfits had resorted to violence to achieve their goals by illegitimate means.

President Mubarak said we must turn over a new leaf. We must correctly analyze the reasons for the violence. However, we must look forward to the future and work to serve the voters who chose their deputies in an atmosphere of freedom and neutrality.

President Mubarak said those who claim that the elections were rigged don't know what they are saying. Egypt will not allow custodianship or interference in its internal affairs. President Mubarak praised the Egyptian judiciary, describing it as above all whim and suspicion. He also praised the Egyptian police, which played a neutral role and did not interfere in the election process.

Answering a question on electricity and water infrastructure projects, President Mubarak explained that 270 projects have been completed. Another 594 projects will be completed before the end of 1996. President Mubarak said: We are greatly interested in building electricity, pure water, and sewage projects despite their high cost. This is necessary to raise the standard of living. He referred to major projects currently underway, such as the national project for developing Sinai. This project, which will cost 75 billion pounds, will create new agricultural lands and open new work opportunities.

Answering a question on terrorism, which has taken root in Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Sudan, and which is being exported to Egypt, President Mubarak explained that in the past he had met with a former Pakistani prime minister [not further identified] and indicated to him the danger posed by "Afghan" Arabs who have training camps in Pakistan and who receive funds from the sale of drugs. President Mubarak noted that the former Pakistani prime minister gave several excuses for his inability to confront the terrorist elements. President Mubarak noted that the situation is completely different now. Incumbent Pakistani Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto is firmly and decisively confronting these terrorist elements.

President Mubarak said terrorism is a worldwide phenomenon. He explained that when he stated this in the past, some imagined that his remarks were for domestic consumption. However, time has proved that states which have adopted a negative attitude toward terorrism are now themselves suffering from terrorism. There is now a united international stand to confront terrorism. There is international cooperation to confront terrorism, from which several rich and poor countries are suffering.

On whether there is a similarity between events in Algeria and events in Egypt, President Mubarak noted there is no comparison between the events in Algeria and the occasional isolated events in Egypt. He said: I greatly appreciate President Zeroual. He is a wise leader. He is dealing with terrorism with wisdom and farsightedness. I had hoped that they would have listened to my advice a long time.

President Mubarak: On the banks of the Nile the first government, the first administration, and the first civilization were established. The Egyptian people will never become a barbaric society that accepts or adopts terrorism. The Egyptians have rejected terrorism throughout their history. The world community must start serious cooperation to confront this danger. Terrorism is a serious epidemic.

On the role of the cooperative societies in keeping prices down and on the role of the Ministry of Supply in this regard, President Mubarak noted the importance of the role played by the Ministry of Supply and cooperative societies. He noted that any decision or legislation must take into consideration its impact on low-income people. We must take care of the interests of the poor. I have opposed and canceled many decisions because they would have affected the low-income class.

On some irregularities in the voter registration lists, President Mubarak said the application of a national number [for every citizen]—a project which is making steady progress—will greatly help to purify the voter registration lists and end these irregularities.

On some stands taken by opposition and government newspapers, President Mubarak noted that the press in Egypt is free. Whoever feels offended or wronged must resort to court. We are eager to maintain the freedom of the press. The press law is being prepared. Streamlining this law does not mean that the rights of the citizens will be ignored.

On reducing the prices of services, such as electricity, President Mubarak noted that any reduction in the prices of services will mean a reduction in revenues. It will also mean a return to the era before economic reform. He noted that these prices are within the framework of economic reform and are periodically adjusted to reflect real cost, although some services will continue to be subsidized.

President Mubarak described the economic reform achievements. He noted that the Egyptian economy has been able to provide essential commodities, such as food and medicine. In the past the Egyptian economy reached a stage where it could not provide such commodities. He noted that economic reform has included all sectors. President Mubarak said the main challenge right now is to increase the growth rate to 8 percent.

President Mubarak noted that we must confront uncontrolled population growth. The continuation of the current birth rate will have negative effects on Egypt's future, will increase problems, and lay to waste all development efforts. He affirmed that the uncontrolled birth rate will push society to the unknown in the future. We will again become a society in which only 10 percent are well off. He said the state cannot enter a race to provide education, hospitals, and other services if the current population growth continues.

Regarding political dialogue among the parties, President Mubarak said the parties must not exchange insults and must not use twisted or dishonest methods because this will produce negative results. President Mubarak said: I had hoped that some opposition elements and leaders would succeed [in the elections] and I greatly regretted the defeat of some them. I also regretted that some people praised the fairness of the elections but then attacked the elections results when they did not win.

The president urged those who did not succeed not to despair and not to lose their nerve and level accusations haphazardly. The elections are not the end of the road. We must look forward to a better future.

On the peace process, President Mubarak explained the outcome of his recent meeting with Israeli Prime Minister Shim'on Peres. He said he felt Peres is eager to achieve broader steps on the road to peace on all tracks and with all the parties. President Mubarak also explained that he felt that Syria is also showing flexibility. He expressed the hope that the peace process will make significant progress. President Mubarak affirmed that Israel cannot have peace with Syria without returning the Golan Heights. He affirmed the principle of land for peace. He said although he hopes the pace of the peace process will quicken, this process will not be completed in weeks but will need efforts and formulas to overcome of all obstacles.

On Egyptian-Arab relations, President Mubarak referred to the excellent relations between Egypt and Saudi Arabia. He said there is no truth in reports that these relations are cool. He said Egypt's relations with the Arab states are strong. On Egypt's relations with Libya, President Mubarak said: We are making endeavors with Libya. There is a big turnabout in Libya's stand on solving the [Lockerbie] problem. As a result of this stand, the sanctions have not been tightened because so far it is not absolutely clear who committed the Lockerbie incident. However, the matter might need some time. President Mubarak referred to the efforts he had made personally to stop any hostile acts against Libya at that time. President Mubarak said Colonel al-Qadhdhafi appreciates the Egyptians and welcomes and encourages the Egyptian labor force in Libya. He appealed to the press and media to create a good climate to improve Arab relations. It is unacceptable that we call for strong relations and for Arab unity and solidarity and then we unwittingly exaggerate some individual incidents; such conduct harms the climate of good relations among Arab states.

On establishing a free zone in Sinai, President Mubarak explained the positive and negative aspects of the establishment of free and open zones. He said it is necessary to study well the feasibility of free zones in new areas.

President Mubarak congratulated the deputies on the people's confidence in them. He wished them and Egypt every success and progress. He noted that the deputies must work for the interest of the homeland. They must win the confidence of the masses and raise the status of the homeland. All legislation must take into consideration the people's interests.

Diplomatic Sources Fear Elections Impact on Aid

NC1212163895 Cairo AL-WAFD in Arabic 9 Dec 95 p 1

[FBIS Translated Text] Western diplomatic sources in Cairo have expressed their fear that the economic assistance program might be affected as a result of the parliamentary elections, which failed to be realistic. The sources affirm that there is general agreement among sponsor states and organizations to provide grants, loans, and economic assistance to the states that adopt the democratic approach and respect human rights and the environment.

The sources point out that reports monitored essential errors and violations in the electoral process that substantiate rigging. They affirm that many sponsor states are awaiting the results of investigations into violations which the government promised.

Ministry Threatens Candidates To Withdraw Cases

NC1212163995 Cairo AL-WAFD in Arabic 9 Dec 95 p 1

[Report by Muhammad 'Abd-al-Fattah and Muhammad Hajras]

[FBIS Translated Text] The Ministry of Interior has initiated a new approach to force the candidates who obtained a ruling from the Administrative Court annulling elections in their constituencies to withdraw their cases. The security agencies threatened a large number of candidates with detention if they persisted on their lawsuits against the Ministry of Interior.

Security directorates in some governorates summoned candidates and demanded them to withdraw their cases from the Administrative Court. The security directorate in al-Sharqiyah is putting heavy pressure on the Wafd Party candidates in Bilbays and Dyarb Najm. It demanded them to sign the appeal the government filed with the court contesting the ruling that annulled the elections in the two constituencies.

The Administrative Court had earlier issued an historic ruling, annulling the interior minister's decree that announced the results of the elections and the run-off elections in 109 constituencies. A security official has stated that a total of 200 rulings have been issued against the ministry. They are expected to rise to 350 rulings.

MB Says Efforts To 'Topple' Parliament Continue

NC1212183395 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Arabic 1730 GMT 12 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Ma'mun al-Hudaybi, spokesman for the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood [MB] group, has affirmed in a statement published by the Lebanese newspaper AL-SAFIR today that efforts to topple the new Egyptian parliament will continue through all possible means.

The Egyptian opposition parties have accused the regime of rigging the recent legislative elections, in which the ruling National Democratic Party won 416 out of 440 seats thanks to the full support provided by the regime's institutions.

For his part, Labor Party Secretary General 'Adil Husayn has stressed the need for a coalition between the nationalist parties and the Muslim Brothers. He said, our goal in the coming stage is to topple the parliament and hold new elections, since the recent elections were illegal.

In a measure that seeks to impose his domination on parliament, Egyptian President Husni Mubarak appointed 10 representatives in the new parliament, including six Copts. Three of them chair parliamentary committees.

Libya

Ambassador to Spain Views Barcelona Conference

BR0712151695 Madrid EL MUNDO in Spanish 7 Dec 95 p 22

[Interview with Ambassador to Spain Nuri Muhammad Bayt-al-Mal by Carlos Alvaro Roldan in Madrid; date not given: "Bayt-al-Mal: 'The Barcelona Conference Sought To Dilute Arab Identity'" — first paragraph is EL MUNDO introduction]

[FBIS Translated Text] Madrid — Libya was the most notable absentee at the recent Euro-Mediterranean conference in Barcelona. Officially it was not invited because it does not have an association agreement with the EU, but in fact the Lockerbie affair was cited as a key factor in the Catalan capital. In December 1988, 270 people were killed in the bombing of a Pan Am aircraft, an attack generally attributed to the agents of al-Qadhdhafi who refused to hand the men over to the British authorities.

[Roldan] Libya was not invited to Barcelona but did attend via the Arab Maghreb Union and the Arab League. How did Tripoli react to that?

[Bayt-al-Mal] The conference was supposed to help develop cooperation between the countries of the EU and those of the Mediterranean. The intentions were good and it created hope. We took a favorable view of it, but a string of developments saw the meeting take a different course.

[Roldan] In what way did it "take a different course?"

[Bayt-al-Mal] Libya expressed its concern that this conference would not live up to the illusions and expectations of the people of this zone. We saw that, as the conference was being planned, a number of non-Mediterranean countries were invited while other truly Mediterranean countries would not be represented. The conference sought to dilute Arab identity, replacing it with another Mediterranean identity in talks with Europe in such a way that Israel could become the main interlocutor.

[Roldan] How do you see the role of the EU?

[Bayt-al-Mal] We were also afraid that Europe would try to impose its opinions, both political and cultural, on the other zone without considering its specific cultural and historical features. For us, this Barcelona conference was a pretext for Europe to benefit from the natural resources of our region, since the two sides are not technologically balanced.

[Roldan] When nuclear proliferation was discussed in Barcelona, as well as security and Islamic fundamentalism, many of the Arab countries said that Libya's presence was needed for these talks to have any meaning.

[Bayt-al-Mal] Not only does Libya have the backing of all Arab countries but also many of the European nations present were not opposed to Libya's attending. The countries that did not want Libya at the meeting got it their way. Europe was especially concerned with two issues at the conference, namely immigration and terrorism. Libya is the best placed country to help find a solution to this problem, because I believe that Libya, as a large country with a relatively small population, is well placed to receive millions of immigrants.

[Roldan] Does Libya feel betrayed by its Maghreb neighbors?

[Bayt-al-Mal] I think the issue goes deeper than that. The fact is that Europe is taking advantage of the situation of some countries in the area and their needs in order to draw them into political positions.

[Roldan] Since al-Qadhdhafi came to power in 1969, Libya has devoted itself to spreading its particular idea of pan-Islamism in a number of ways. Has the "medicine" turned against it?

[Bayt-al-Mal] Extremist and fundamentalist groups have emerged which are not really under control. However, the reality has nothing to do with what is being claimed. Things have occurred at a particular level just as they occur regularly in many other regions of the world. Fundamentalism unfortunately exists among Muslims just as it exists in other religions and races.

[Roldan] Two months ago, Mu'ammar al-Qadhdhafi ordered the expulsion of 30,000 Palestinians as a protest against the agreement reached between 'Arafat and Israel to extend the autonomy of the West Bank. The colonel finally retracted the order, but hundreds of Palestinians are now trapped on the border between Egypt and Libya because they cannot enter Gaza and they do not want to return either.

[Bayt-al-Mal] The Palestinians were not expelled. Quite simply, as a result of the changes in the area and the creation of an autonomous Palestinian authority, Libya felt that it had a duty to help the Palestinians living in our country return to their homeland.

[Roldan] Giving them just 30 days to do so?

[Bayt-al-Mal] When Italy invaded Libya, it annexed a third of the Libyan people while another third emigrated. When Libya obtained its independence, all these people returned home. The same thing happened with the Palestinians. No Palestinian can accuse Libya of not having done its duty as an Arab country.

Morocco

MAP Reports Pelletreau News Conference

LD1212134095 Rabat MAP in English
1316 GMT 12 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Rabat, Dec 12 (MAP) — American Assistant Secretary of State for Middle East Affairs, Robert Pelletreau, said the United States "would like to see a free, fair and impartial referendum in the Sahara to determine the preferences of the people of the region".

"If a dialogue can advance that, then a dialogue might be useful. But we do not ourselves propose anything beyond the secretary general's plan in the United Nations", he added. Speaking at a press conference, Monday in Rabat, at the end of a one day visit to Morocco, the US official said his country is working with other members of the Security Council to obtain a resolution endorsing the secretary general's report on the Western Sahara.

Pelletreau, who reviewed with Moroccan officials the latest developments on this issue, said consultations are under way concerning the different positions voiced by all parties in conflict regarding the UN secretary general's report on this issue.

Algeria has recently voiced concern over the report of the UN secretary general who suggested a number of measures to speed up the referendum process in this territory (south of Morocco) that was recovered by Morocco from Spanish colonialism in 1975.

The same concern was voiced by the Algerian-backed guerilla movement the "Polisario" Front [Popular Front for the Liberation of Saquia El Hamra and Rio de Oro] which claims independence of this Saharan territory. The divergences between the parties in conflict concern the number of eligible Saharan voters to this referendum.

Pelletreau said this dispute "is ripe for resolution and if there is something the United States can do to help in this situation, we are interested in doing it".

"We have always thought it would be a preferable outcome to have a kind of referendum to give international legitimacy to the choice of the people of the territory", he concluded.

During his stay, the US official was received by King Hassan II of Morocco and met with prime minister and minister of foreign affairs, Abdellatif Filali, and other cabinet members.

Pelletreau described as "very productive" the talks he had with them on issues such as the latest developments in the Middle East peace process, economic relations, the Western Sahara, Algeria, and the coming phase of international activity in Bosnia in the wake of the Dayton agreement. He said the US has long enjoyed a close and friendly relationship with Morocco and portrayed King Hassan as "an old valued friend whose advice we seek on a wide range of issues". He added that the United States and Morocco have important commercial ties, strengthened and broadened most recently by the Morocco trade and investment mission to the US, and a long-standing security cooperation relationship.

The US assistant secretary of state described as "mutually respectful dialogue" discussions he had with Moroccan authorities on "human rights, the development of democratic process and respect for the rule of law".

After Rabat, Robert Pelletreau headed Tuesday for Tunisia.

Human Rights Organization Issues Report

LD1212143295 Rabat MAP in English
1345 GMT 12 dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Rabat.12 Dec (MAP) — Moroccan Human Rights Organization (OMDH) has welcomed Morocco's efforts in the field of human rights and called for the speeding up of reforms that guarantee these rights.

Speaking at a news conference Sunday in Rabat, the chairman of this independent organization, Abdelaziz Bennani who presented the OMDH annual report on "the situation of human rights in Morocco" for the year 1995, said progress vas been made since 1989 in matters of human rights enforcement. He noted however a slowdown in the reforms process in 1995. He recalled in this regard, the royal amnesty in 1994, the revision of the constitution, the penal code, the custody detention system, the creation of administrative courts and the ratification of human rights-related conventions.

He said his organization will endeavor to strengthen the state of democracy and to promote civilian, social, economic and cultural rights.

Bennani urged all parties to make further efforts in this matter and urged the government to adopt a coherent policy that guarantees a lasting protection of human rights in Morocco.

In its annual report, the organization, while denouncing certain cases of human rights violation in Morocco, notes that the progress made in this field has helped strengthen the role of the civilian society in consolidating the basis of the state of democracy and the respect for the rule of law.

The organization noted with satisfaction the measures taken in accordance with the royal high directives aiming at improving the condition of the magistrates.

It called for the reform of the status of the magistrature to ensure the independence of judges and their freedom of action.

The document which establishes a link between the respect for human rights and democracy, recalls the king's speech calling for the "improvement of the institutions".

The organization wished that the planned reforms would strengthen the principles of the separation of powers, independence of justice and consolidation of the rule of law.

The document described as important the adoption by the parliament of the status of professional journalists that guarantees the right to freedom of speech while calling for the amendment of certain provisions of this status, namely the one concerning the respect of the professional secret.

The report of the OMDH denounces, on the other hand, the serious violations of human rights in the camps of Tindouf (south-western Algeria), where Saharan populations are forcibly detained and prevented from returning to Morocco. These violations, the report notes, are reported by a several witnesses and confirmed by Amnesty International.

The organization also evokes the situation of human rights in several countries of the Maghreb and the Arab world and notes the escalation of xenophobia and racism against Moroccans and Africans in Europe.

Sudan

Government Supported by Political Organizations

EA1212215795 Omdurman Republic of Sudan Radio Network in Arabic 0430 GMT 12 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] The National and Islamic parties and Palestinian forces in Lebanon have called for general national and Islamic mobilization to support Sudan's independent nationalist stance. They affirmed in a statement that foreign intervention against Sudan was a part of a wider U.S.-Zionist conspiracy against the Arab and Islamic nation. They condemned the U.S. administration's suspect role in instigating countries to fragment Sudan's unity of Sudan and blockade its people. They stressed that the U.S. attack was targeting the nationalist options [of Sudan] and that the attack was part of an attack against Lebanon, Iraq and Libya, seeking to redraw the map of the region in a manner which served the interests of the new world order.

President Meets Nigerian Envoy, Comments on Ties

EA1212215595 Khartoum SUNA in Arabic 1100 GMT 12 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Khartoum, 12 Dec (SUNA) — The president of the Republic, staff Lieutenant General 'Umar Hasan al-Bashir, has received a written message from the Nigerian president Sani Abacha, in connection with the current political developments in both the regional and international arena.

Receiving the Nigerian head of state's envoy here yesterday, Lieutenant General al-Bashir affirmed the depth and strength of the bilateral relations and the need to improve and push them forward to wider horizons. Al-Bashir reiterated Sudan's firm stance in supporting its brothers in Nigeria in the direction of securing their stability and progress within the context of their independent decision making.

Vice President Reaffirms Country's Independent Course

EA1212213995 Omdurman Republic of Sudan Radio Network in Arabic 0430 GMT 12 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Addressing a rally yesterday in honor of the police martyrs at the unified police headquarters, Major General al-Zubayr Muhammad Salih, the first vice president of the Republic, said that the accusation of new world order that Sudan was guilty of terrorism and human rights violations combined with manifestations of enmity on the part of neighboring countries and the severance of diplomatic relations with Sudan by some of them cannot harm Sudan. He said Sudan would persevere with its cultural course.

His excellency praised the police and their support for the Armed Forces in defending the faith and the homeland. He hailed the police martyrs and their families. He stressed that the Sudanese people were unanimous in their refusal to allow the banner of, There is No God But Allah, to fall regardless of the enemies fighting against Sudan. His excellency expressed confidence in the Muslim peoples' support for Sudan in hoisting that banner. He referred to the extensive social transformation in Sudan under the revolution.

Bahrain

Opposition Fears 'Bloodbath'; Saudi Soldiers Said Sent In

MM1212152695 London AL-QUDS AL-'ARABI in Arabic 12 Dec 95 p 1

[Unattributed report: "Bahraini Opposition Fears 'Bloodbath' as 4,000 Saudi Soldiers Cross Causeway"]

[FBIS Translated Text] London, AL-QUDS AL-'ARABI — The Bahraini opposition yesterday expressed its fears that the government might implement its recent threats to drown oppositionists in a "bloodbath" to end the demand for restoring the constitution and democracy to the country.

The Free Men of Bahrain Movement stressed in a statement, of which AL-QUDS AL-'ARABI has received a copy, that 4,000 Saudi soldiers crossed the causeway between the two countries yesterday morning with their heavy equipment and weapons, and that military units from the Army were seen deployed throughout the country, bringing back the atmosphere of violent confrontation that broke out in Bahrain at the end of last year.

The movement linked the military escalation to the failure of the Muscat Gulf summit, from which Qatar pulled out, confirming the depth of disputes among the Gulf Cooperation Council states.

Amir on Meeting With Qatari Counterpart, Iran

MM1112122195 London AL-HAYAH in Arabic 9 Dec 95 pp 1, 6

[Report on interview with Amir of Bahrain Shaykh 'Isa Bin-Salman Al Khalifah by Chief Editor Jihad al-Khazin in Manama on 8 December]

[FBIS Translated Text] Amir of Bahrain Shaykh 'Isa Bin-Salman told AL-HAYAH yesterday that he held a friendly meeting with Amir of Qatar Shaykh Hamad Bin-Khalifah on the periphery of the Gulf summit held in Muscat, and that the meeting dealt with all matters of common concern.

Shaykh 'Isa was answering brief questions put by AL-HAYAH's chief editor after a private meeting with him in the amiri court.

Asked whether he discussed with Shaykh Hamad the border dispute between the two countries, Shaykh 'Isa said: "The meeting was friendly, but we did not discuss specific points concerning the current dispute, but, rather, common interests."

The amir of Bahrain said that he and Shaykh Hamad welcomed the Saudi mediation to resolve the dispute at the closed meeting of Gulf leaders during the summit. Asked whether there were any developments, he said, "I hope so."

Shaykh 'Isa also spoke about the withdrawal of the amir of Qatar from the final session in protest at the agreement of the other five member states of the Gulf Cooperation Council [GCC] to choose Saudi candidate Jamil al-Hujaylan — instead of the Qatari candidate — as GCC secretary general to succeed Shaykh Fahim al-Qasimi. He said: "The pullout occurred at the last moment, after Qatar had offered what it considered a way out of the crisis, namely to renew the current secretary general's term by one year after which a successor would be selected. But Shaykh Hamad withdrew because Qatar's view had not been adopted."

Asked about the incidents the country [Bahrain] has witnessed over recent months, he said that they are "strange," accusing foreign quarters of inciting them.

[Al-Khazin] Do you mean Iran?

[Al Khalifah] I am saying from outside.

[Al-Khazin] Are there contacts with Iran?

[Al Khalifah] Yes. [al Khalifah ends]

I [al-Khazin] told the amir that I had heard in Manama that there are thoughts of electing half of the Shura Council members and appointing the other half, as a response to recent demands. He said: "Such an idea does not exist at present. However, there is a tendency to increase the Shura Council's powers gradually. If that coincides with strong media openness, it would give citizens a better picture of the council's role, tasks, and duties." The amir said that "arrangements are being made to reform municipalities with a view to increasing citizens' participation and eventually holding municipal elections."

Official sources in Manama expect the amir to announce an amnesty for some prisoners on the occasion of national day next week. The sources stressed this is a well-known tradition on such an occasion and has nothing to do with current sentences or trials.

Kuwait

Foreign Minister Says Qatar GCC Withdrawal 'Accidental'

LD1312080495 Kuwait KUNA in Arabic 0604 GMT 13 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Kuwait, 13 Dec — The State of Kuwait expressed its conviction of the strength of relations between the countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council and their capability of finding more cohesion now and in the future.

Shaykh Sabah al-Ahmad, first deputy prime minister and foreign affairs minister, said that in an interview with AL-WATAN newspaper published here today.

Shaykh Sabah al-Ahmad stressed his conviction of the cohesion of the GCC's countries now and in the future by saying that "the GCC is coherent and will remain coherent."

As for the withdrawal of the State of Qatar from the final session of the GCC's leaders' 16th summit, which was held in Muscat in the period 4-6 December, and the effect of that on the Gulf bond, Shaykh Sabah said that "the Qatari position was accidental and will disappear soon."

Qatar

Government Sends Memo to GCC Confirming Boycott

MM1212145195 London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 12 Dec 95 p 1

[Report by Hasin al-Bunyan: "Qatar Officially Decides To Boycott GCC Meetings"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Riyadh — Informed Gulf diplomatic sources confirmed to AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT yesterday that the Qatari Government has sent the Gulf Cooperation Council [GCC] General Secretariat an official memorandum clarifying its position on the Gulf summit's decision to appoint Shaykh Jamil al-Hujaylan as the new GCC secretary general and confirming its boycott of and nonparticipation in any meetings at ministerial council (foreign ministers) level or ministerial committees level, or any meetings in which the new secretary general participates.

Official Saudi sources declined to comment on the Qatari escalation, saying that the Qataris' dispute is with the summit, hence we cannot comment on that position.

AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT has learned that the State of Qatar is expected to participate in the meetings of the foreign ministers of the Damascus declaration states, scheduled to be held in Damascus 27-28 December, in which former GCC Secretary General Shaykh Fahim Bin-Sultan al-Qasimi, whose term ends at the end of March, will take part. However, the Qataris are not expected to participate in the ministerial council (foreign ministers) meeting scheduled to be held in Riyadh in March, during which the new secretary general, Shaykh Jamil Ibrahim al-Hujaylan, is expected to take over from al-Qasimi. [passage omitted]

'Diplomat' Warns of Possible 'Axis' With Iran, Iraq

MM1212152995 London AL-QUDS AL-'ARABI in Arabic 12 Dec 95 p 3

[Report by 'Asim 'Abd-al-Muhsin: "Signs of New Axis Comprising Qatar, Iraq, Iran...and Yemen If Saudi Arabia Fails To Contain GCC Split"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Dubai — Political sources said yesterday that the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, in the wake of the State of Qatar's defiance, is rushing to stress the importance of its role as a big brother in protecting the oil-rich region, pointing to potential threats from Iran and Iraq.

Qatar boycotted the final session of the Gulf Cooperation Council [GCC] summit held in the Sultanate of Oman last week in protest at the appointment of a Saudi, instead of a Qatari, as GCC secretary general.

The boycott was the first event of its kind in summit meetings and the most serious public crisis faced by the GCC, in which Saudi Arabia plays a leading role.

The GCC was established in 1981 for one principal aim, namely to deter any potential threats from Iran following the eruption of the Islamic revolution there.

The sources said that it seems that the crisis is going to escalate following Qatar's threat on Saturday to boycott Gulf meetings and any other regional meetings until the dispute over the appointment of the Saudi Jamil al-Hujaylan as GCC secretary general is resolved.

A diplomat in the Gulf region has said that "Qatar is unlikely to remain silent if a solution has not been achieved. One of the likely possibilities is the emergence of a new axis in the region comprising Qatar, Iran, Iraq, and maybe Yemen." [passage omitted]

Saudi Arabia

Al-Ahmar Congratulates King Fahd on Leaving Hospital

LD1112133595 Riyadh SPA in Arabic 1230 GMT 11 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Riyadh, 11 Dec — Shaykh Abdallah al-Ahmar, speaker of the National Assembly in the Republic of Yemen, has expressed his pleasure, happiness, and warm congratulations on the occasion of the safe discharge of King Fahd Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz Al Sa'ud, servant of the two holy places, from the hospital following his temporary indisposition.

In an interview with AL-JAZIRAH published here today he wished the servant of the two holy places continued health, fitness, and longevity and the Saudi people continued progress, prosperity, and affluence under his righteous leadership. [passage omitted]

AP Criticized for Reportage on Saudi-Yemeni Clash

LD1312104495 Riyadh SPA in Arabic
0636 GMT 13 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Riyadh, 13 Dec — Today's Saudi newspapers appeared carrying the following main headlines: [passage omitted]

Under the title: "The Associated Press's Lie," AL-RIYADH newspaper referred to what the Associated Press transmitted on the incursion of Saudi forces into Yemeni territory... and said that that fell within the framework of formulae which attempt to surprise the mind, an approach which succeeded during the Cold War when control over information was in the hands of the superpowers, and its influence led to wars breaking out, diplomats expelled, and borders closed for just a small lie by any country to cause tension in the relations between two countries.

It goes on to say that if we consider the world a small village with its events, upheavals, the ease of the interconnection of its world, and the numerous sources which compete to get a scoop and publish it, the Associated Press is still living in epochs whose timing has ended, and only small memories are left of them.

The newspaper stresses that the leaderships of the Kingdom and of Yemen do not contain a reckless person who would respond to such a naive lie, the proof being that the two sides have denied the incident in a manner that is closer to ridiculing the international agency than adopting a defensive stance, or simply denying it.

At the end of its editorial, the newspaper affirmed that if the domination and control over information is still in the hands of forces motivated by incorrect intentions, the range of the human mind plays an adverse role, and the experience of transmitting news similar to that of the Associated Press falls within this context where we laugh, because the irony of this is that it is funny. [passage omitted]

Yemen

Ministry Denies Border Tension With Saudi Arabia

LD1212151495 Riyadh Saudi Arabian Kingdom Radio Network in Arabic 1430 GMT 12 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] The Republic of Yemen has refuted the truth of the news which indicated the occurrence of tension on the border between the Republic of Yemen and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. A responsible source at the Yemeni Foreign Affairs Ministry sources said in a statement distributed in Sanaa today that there was no truth in the news which mentioned that an official at the Yemeni Foreign Affairs Ministry had given a statement to the Associated Press on the occurrence of tension on the border between Yemen and the kingdom.

He added that the Republic of Yemen is keen to strengthen its relations with its brothers in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, and that these are characterized by brotherhood, cordiality, and cooperation, proceeding from the al-Ta'if agreement and the memorandum of understanding for the good and interest of the two fraternal and neighborly peoples.

Further on Ministry Refutation

LD1212200895 Riyadh SPA in Arabic
1845 GMT 12 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Al-Dammam, 12 December — The undersecretary of the Yemeni Foreign Affairs Ministry, Ghalib 'Ali Jamil, refuted the truth of the news which reported that an official at the Yemeni Foreign Affairs Ministry had given a statement to the ASSOCIATED PRESS on movements taking place on the border between Yemen and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

Jamil said in a statement to 'AL-YAWM' newspaper to be published in its edition of tomorrow, Wednesday, that Yemen was keen on its relations with its brothers in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia which were characterized by cordiality, brotherhood, and cooperation proceeding from the Ta'if agreement, and the memorandum of understanding signed between the two countries for the good of the two fraternal peoples.

The Yemeni official affirmed his country's desire in bilateral relations with the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, and in the progress of the march of negotiations between the two countries in an atmosphere in which love and harmony prevailed.

'Clash' Said Followed Saudi Troop Movements on Border

MM1212165895 London AL-QUDS AL-'ARABI in Arabic 12 Dec 95 p 1

[Unattributed report: "New Saudi-Yemeni Clashes; Riyadh Intensifies Neutralization Process To Impose Fait Accompli on Border"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Sanaa, London, AL-QUDS AL-'ARABI — Western diplomats in the Yemeni capital, Sanaa, have revealed that a border clash occurred last week between Saudi and Yemeni forces when Saudi forces tried to cross into Yemeni territory at the triangle point linking Oman, Yemen, and Saudi Arabia.

The diplomatic sources quoted eyewitnesses arriving from that region as saying that the border area has witnessed extensive Saudi military movements over the past two days, including the movement of three infantry and armored brigades, combat helicopters, and AWACS aircraft.

The confrontation led to a number of soldiers on both sides being wounded and number of others captured.

Informed Yemeni sources have told AL-QUDS AL-'ARABI that the Saudi attempt occurred at a time when Yemen and Saudi Arabia are continuing their talks on the border in accordance with the memorandum of understanding signed by them in February, in addition to the meetings of the joint committees formed under the memorandum on demarcating the border between the two countries.

The sources pointed out that the Yemenis are complaining about what they term the policy of imposing a fait accompli by demarcating the border between Yemen and Saudi Arabia. They say that this concept is no longer acceptable and has been overtaken by events in view of the changes taking place in the world, which does not approve of the principle of resorting to military and financial force to impose something unrealistic or unacceptable.

Yemeni politicians told AL-QUDS AL-'ARABI yesterday that the Saudis are currently neutralizing Yemeni citizens on a large scale in the Yemeni border governorates of Sa'dah, Hadhramaut, and al-Mahrah in a race with time, seeking to exert pressure and impose a fait accompli before the two countries complete the demarcation of the common border in accordance with the stipulations of the memorandum of understanding.

The politicians added that in doing so Saudi Arabia is violating the stipulations of the memorandum and the al-Ta'if agreement signed in 1943. They said that the policy of imposing a fait accompli will be futile and will not be accepted by Yemen.

AL-QUDS AL-'ARABI has learned that a Saudi patrol infiltrated the border in the Thamud area, north of Hadhramaut, some 10 days ago. It was confronted by Yemeni forces, which captured and disarmed its elements. Then the Yemeni Government returned them to Riyadh through official channels. Saudi authorities said the incident was merely "a mistake."

It is worth mentioning that the Thamud area is rich in oil, and Riyadh claims that it is part of Saudi territory.

Observers stress that the new Saudi skirmish confirms Riyadh's desire to seize a land passage to the Arabian Sea for use to export oil in the future. This was one of the reasons for its support for the secessionists in the civil war in the summer of last year.

'Aziz Views Allegations on Imported Missile Parts

JN1212192395 Baghdad Iraq Television Network in Arabic 1800 GMT 12 Dec 95

[Announcer-read report over video]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Deputy Prime Minister Tariq 'Aziz held a meeting today with Russian Ambassador Sergey Lavrov, president of the UN Security Council.

Taking part in the meeting were Riyad al-Qaysi, under secretary of the Foreign Ministry, and Ambassador Nizar Hamdun, Iraq's permanent UN representative.

Emerging from the meeting, Deputy Prime Minister Tariq 'Aziz told journalists: It was a constructive meeting. I explained to the UN Security Council president the substantial progress that has been achieved in our relations with the Special Commission. I informed the Council president that the relationship with the Special Commission over the past period has been constructive and businesslike. Iraq did its best to clarify all issues raised over the past period. Our assessment of the situation is that substantial progress has been achieved. We hope that the Special Commission's next report will reflect this substantial progress. We hope that the UN Security Council will respond fairly and will acknowledge this progress and the Iraqi authorities' readiness to close this file within a short time.

Regarding the allegations on Iraqi attempts to import missile devices, the deputy prime minister said: These are nothing but allegations that will never be proven true. We are not responsible for that. It is not Iraq's intention to do such things. It is ridiculous to say that the Iraqi authorities are doing that at a time when all missiles have been destroyed since 1991. All Iraqi industries are under the full supervision of the Special Commission. He added: These are unfounded allegations announced the same day we announced our intention to visit the United Nations. [passage omitted]

'Aziz Meets With Security Council Members, Ekeus

JN1312113795 Baghdad INA in Arabic 1022 GMT 13 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] United Nations, 13 Dec (INA)—Deputy Prime Minister Tariq 'Aziz will hold a new series of meetings with the Security Council's permanent and nonpermanent members in New York today.

'Aziz met with Ambassador Nabil al-'Arabi, Egypt's permanent representative, yesterday. Egypt will be a nonpermanent member of the Security Council at the beginning of next month.

'Aziz also met with Ambassador Qin Huasun, China's permanent representative, and with Ambassador Ibrahim Gambari, Nigeria's permanent representative at the United Nations. During these meetings, 'Aziz detailed Iraqi efforts to achieve great progress in its relationship with the UN Special Commission.

Sergey Lavrov, Russia's ambassador and chairman of the Security Council, yesterday briefed the Security Council member states on the details of his meeting with Deputy Prime Minister Tariq 'Aziz.

Lavrov told reporters: In response to 'Aziz' wish, I briefed the Security Council members on the details of my meeting with him. He added: 'Aziz requested me to inform the Security Council that since August the Iraqi Government has been making genuine efforts to improve cooperation with the Special Commission. This will be the Iraqi Government's future policy. He also requested me to inform the Security Council that Iraq expects this cooperation to receive the appropriate response from the Security Council. Naturally, I informed the Security Council.

Lavrov also pointed out that he briefed 'Aziz on two issues. The first issue pertains to Resolution 986, which was raised earlier by some Security Council member states in the hope that Iraq will accept this resolution. The second issue pertains to the fate of the persons missing in Iraq and the desire to speed up the work of the technical subcommittee under the patronage of the International Committee of the Red Cross.

Ambassador Lavrov added: Mr. Tariq 'Aziz asserted that Resolution 986 is unacceptable to the Iraqi Government. As for the problem of missing persons, 'Aziz told me that the Iraqi Government is seriously cooperating as part of the technical subcommittee and it will continue to do so to close all files as quickly as possible. Lavrov said that the talk about Russian missile equipment or missiles sent to Iraq was inspired by a sick imagination.

'Aziz also held a meeting with Ambassador Rolf Ekeus, chairman of the UN Special Commission, at his residence yesterday evening. Following the meeting, Ekeus spoke to journalists. He said: It was a very important meeting, taking into account an issue called the Jordanian issue, as you know. The Jordanian authorities have discovered materials. We discussed this issue. In general, we assessed the relationship between Iraq and the Special Commission, which is currently a continuous and dynamic process in which there is much revelation. We agreed on full cooperation and on working in broad daylight. I presented initial evidence on our intentions regarding the report we will submit to the Security Council on Friday.

Ekeus Accused of 'Discrimination,' 'Bias'

MM0712160895 London AL-QUDS AL-'ARABI in Arabic 6 Dec 95 p 11

[Article by former minister Dr. Muhammad Fadil al-Jamali: "Is Ambassador Ekeus' Mission To Prolong the Iraqi People's Tragedy?"]

[FBIS Translated Text] The author of these lines has the highest regard for the noble Swedish people and their venerable monarch. Sweden is a country which has attained the highest level of modern civilization with regard to human values. It has given birth to men known for their loyalty, initiative, and sincerity in the international arena such as:

1. Count Bernadotte, the international mediator who worked to establish peace in Palestine after the UN General Assembly's unjust decision to partition Palestine. The Zionist "Stern" gang led by Shamir (who was the Likud leader in Israel) assassinated him, along with the French officer accompanying him.

2. Dag Hammarskjold, the second UN secretary general known for his fairness, courage, impartiality, and independent views. His was an era of prosperity for the United Nations. He was martyred while performing his duty in the service of peace in Africa.

3. Gunnar Jarring, the mediator appointed by the United Nations to implement Resolution 242 on peace between the Arabs and Israel after the 1967 war, who made every effort to accomplish his task conscientiously. Israel, however, did not comply with the resolution despite the fact that it contained an Israeli conspiracy, and although the late Jamal 'Abd-al-Nasir accepted Secretary of State Rogers' justification of the resolution. Faced by Israeli intransigence, Gunnar Jarring had to abandon his mission.

The Swedish people should be proud of their three sons whose names have entered modern history.... We have not had the honor to get acquainted with Ambassador Ekeus. He is of a generation which succeeds ours and we have not heard or read anything from him prior to his appointment as the head of the commission for removing Iraq's lethal weapons after the end of the second Gulf war (Iraq-Kuwait). The first thing we discovered was the welcome extended to him by the Zionist lobby in the Washington Institute for Near East Studies and his compliance with the lobby in his biased stance against the Iraqi regime....

From the time he started work five years ago until now, the Zionist elements and U.S. and Zionist intelligence organs have been feeding him with hostile directives and false rumors, inventing information about Iraq's past, present, and future. It seems that Ekeus was not sure of his mission and neither did he explain it, but announced three years later that his mission would end after setting up the monitoring systems, that everything was fine, and that the blockade on the people would end after some months. The monitoring systems were in place and the Iraqi Government complied with all the demands to remove weapons and destroy them, but the unjust blockade of the Iraqi people and the aggression against Iraq's independence did not end. There was no disclosure of secrets and hidden motives rejected by human values and condemned by ethics and divine precepts.

There is a hidden diabolical scheme behind the second Gulf war. The second Gulf war did not take place to liberate the brotherly Kuwaiti people, but instead was intended to destroy Iraq's government and people and pave the way for Israeli hegemony over the Middle East's economy and to enable Zionism to play a more important role in directing the world's policy through the United States, which controls the United Nations.

Current U.S. policy is totally wrong and misguided. Iraq never was and never will be hostile to the Jews, just as it never was and never will be opposed to the West in general and the United States in particular. It follows an Arab Islamic policy friendly to everyone, and urges peace and fraternity between nations based on right, justice, and dignity. It rejects and resists aggression from any side and condemns the racial and religious discrimination, hegemony, and arrogance of the colonialist and Zionist extremist states. The destruction of Iraq's government and people is a loss for humanity. The "holocaust" planned by U.S. Zionism, the containment policy drawn up for Iraq and Iran, putting the yarmulke on the U.S. President's head, and the Congress' decision to move the U.S. Embassy from Tel Aviv to Arab Jerusalem are all actions resulting from ignorance and shortsightedness. We had hoped that Ambassador Ekeus would keep up his country's good reputation established by Count Bernadotte, Dag Hammarskjold, and Gunnar Jarring, but it seems that he is helpless and under the influence of the Zionist lobby which has planned the holocaust for the Iraqis. If the Jewish holocaust took place in the crematoriums and gas chambers, the holocaust which exterminates the children, the sick and the elderly of Iraq is taking place slowly with constant pains and torture.

And you, Mr. Ekeus, have the task of supervising the extermination of the Iraqi people like the German Nazi supervising the lighting of the crematoriums. The means are different but the end is the same. What Presidents Bush and Clinton have done to the Iraqi people compares to what Hitler and Stalin did to the Jewish people, except that the means of extermination are different and propaganda has hidden the truth from the great American people.

The mission you were entrusted with, Mr. Ekeus, required no more than five months, and yet you spent five years because you had to comply with U.S. directives and did not have the autonomy that Dag Hammarskjold (May God's mercy be with him) enjoyed. The U.S. directives are based on information from the CIA and from the Iraqi regime's enemies, be they individuals or governments. You should have relied instead on concrete observations and accurate information (regarding the possession of weapons) from the eastern and western superpowers' institutions specializing in strategic studies. Your reliance on rumors, false provocations, and wasted days and months and years are not over, and your search for the past and the future is a search which has nothing to do with the political and military situation in the Middle East because the present is unaware of the past and the future does not necessarily depend on the present. Therefore your mission is an impossible mission aimed at perpetuating the blockade and humiliating and destroying the Iraqi people! Here you are touring the Gulf states today because the United Nations cannot provide the necessary funds for your mission. Your mission, in my view, is like the Israeli Army's mission which forced the Egyptian POW's to dig graves and when they finished digging, killed and buried them in them!

Yes, if you want to prolong your mission and collect money for that purpose, this means that you will call for the blockade on Iraq and the Iraqi people to continue. We would frankly tell you that your mission is not based on any legitimate foundations and that it is not the solution to the Middle East's problem.

The solution is a worldwide ban on lethal weapons, starting with the United States and ending with Israel. It is neither logical nor fair that Iraq should be stripped of its weapons while Israel is armed to the teeth with the latest lethal weapons. If there was a general ban, your mission would not be needed. Your mission is based on discrimination and bias and there is nothing in international law which allows a superpower to interfere with a country's freedom to acquire weapons. The Security Council forced Iraq to withdraw from Kuwait, and it should have also forced Israel to withdraw from south Lebanon. The fact that the United States uses double standards with regard to the ownership of nuclear weapons, the definition of human rights, terrorism, and democracy, will not achieve peace or stability in the world. If your intention, Mr. Ekeus, is to follow your state's policy, then you should not have taken one side at the expense of the other during your mission. However, if you have been imbued with Zionist rancor and the U.S. arrogance it has caused, then we can only wait for divine retribution which has started to appear in the form of terrorism and violence in the United States, Israel, Egypt, Riyadh, Pakistan, and many other countries under the influence of misguided U.S. policy and its disappointing results. We say this not because we are gloating — since we feel sorry whenever disaster strikes our brothers in humanity — but because we would like to reiterate a basic scientific principle in international politics, namely that every political action causes a reaction and each injustice on humans is followed by retribution and punishment. The perpetrators of the injustice on the Iraqi people and the aggression against Iraq must remember the Koranic verse: "And soon will the unjust assailants know what vicissitudes their affairs will take," for there is a God protecting the Iraqi people. And may peace be upon all peace lovers and those who work for peace.

Paper Urges Islamic States To End Sanctions

JN1112103295 Baghdad INA in Arabic
0730 GMT 11 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Baghdad, 11 Dec (INA)—The newspaper AL-THAWRAH has called on the foreign ministers of Islamic states to play their role and exercise their responsibilities according to the principles and teachings of Islam and according to the principles and objectives for the sake of which the Conference of Islamic Organization [OIC] was established.

In an article today, AL-THAWRAH urges the Islamic states to support justice and bolster the efforts being made to lift the unfair blockade imposed on the people of Iraq. The paper says that the Islamic states should remember that this rancorous, aggressive, and unfair U.S. attitude toward Iraq can extend to apply to any other Muslim country in the future whenever their will and interests conflict with the U.S. will and colonialist interests.

AL-THAWRAH holds the United States basically responsible for the five-year genocide and starvation against the Muslim Iraqi people. The paper continues: It is no secret that the United States is also responsible for the merciless, destructive war in Afghanistan and that it remained idle toward the ethnic cleansing crimes in Bosnia for over three years. However, it suddenly remembered that it is necessary to end this war for its own reasons. Certainly, preserving Muslims' rights is not one of these reasons.

The paper indicates that Iraq, which is taking part in the 23d session of the OIC foreign ministers conference in the Guinea capital, Conakry, has the right to ask the conferees not to ignore the issue of the unfair blockade imposed on it.

The paper says that the Islamic states have a religious and human duty toward supporting the fair and legitimate Iraqi request to expeditiously implement Paragraph 22 of Resolution 687 and to support it with all their potential to end the crime of comprehensive genocide being waged against it. The paper emphasizes that Iraq has cooperated and is cooperating with the Special Commission within a clear and responsible political course that aims at removing all the pretexts and excuses used by the evil ones to prolong the blockade.

The paper adds: It is high time the OIC adopted a firm and responsible Islamic stand against the blockade imposed on Iraq, especially after the exposure of all U.S. pretexts to prolong the blockade. International events and developments have shown that the United States is hostile to Islam and Muslims. It is immaterial that the United States is trying to throw dust in the eyes and pretending that it stands against the continuation of wars and massacres against Muslims.

Concluding AL-THAWRAH says: What Iraq, Sudan, Libya, and other Islamic states are being exposed to proves beyond any doubt that the United States is the deadliest foe of Islam and Muslims in the world and that it is behind all the problems and challenges threatening their security and future.

Paper Calls For Iraqi-Gulf 'Security Zone'

JN1312094595 Baghdad AL-THAWRAH in Arabic 26 Nov 95 p 3

[Article by Dr. 'Aziz 'Ali: "Our Joint Iraqi-Gulf House: The Diplomacy of Shaykh Zayid Is a Secure Alternative to the Diplomacy of Violence"]

[FBIS Translated Text] People speak about the lessons learned from the military aggression and the years of embargo on Iraq as well as the years of exhaustion, intimidation, and fear of the unknown in our Arabian Gulf. If we are to use scholastic terms to describe that experience, we must admit that the past few years have not only been a lesson, but an entire university course. The Iraqi people may not have been the only ones to obtain a B.A. degree for their defiance, patience, and endurance in this historic scholastic course, but they are certainly the most qualified, since they have been the leading party in this camp of defiance and endurance.

The region is still encircled by cordons of fire, injustice, exhaustion, and morally devastating intimidation. This makes us wonder: Is it conceivable for our kinfolk in the Gulf house to burn themselves for the sake of the foreigner? Before going any further to describe some of the fire cordons circling our Arabian Gulf, we say to our kinfolk in the Arabian Gulf that the memory of your Iraqi brethren may still carry the bitterness of the injustice that has been committed against them by some of their kinfolk and the silence they have maintained over the crime of starvation and destruction, but Iraq has always tried to alleviate and brush aside many things in the interest of the nation and the joint Iraqi-Gulf house. However, this does not mean accepting the attitude of both silence and destruction, otherwise some people might accuse the Iraqi people of sulking.

Imam al-Shafi'i [founder of one of the four orthodox Islamic schools of theology] said: an empty stomach distracts the mind. Still, the Iraqis have remained patient and steadfast out of faith, optimism, and hope that our kinfolk would wisen up to the danger of simply standing by and remaining silent over the attempts to hurt, destroy, and starve the Iraqi people. We believe that everyone understands that the war which is now being fought by non-military means, is not only aimed at the Iraqi people, but the whole of our Arabian Gulf. Here is a man of religion in the Gulf placing in our hands the file of intimidation and internecine fighting which Washington is trying to slip in from time to time under different influential and resounding facades, names, and signatures. The file is the report compiled by the Richard Murphy Center. In his report, Murphy, a former senior State Department official, speaks about the State Department's priorities to back what the report terms Gulf opposition forces against their governments.

The report does not allude to, but works for, the creation of an atmosphere of non-confidence in official institutions in the Gulf and tries to instigate political, social, and religious forces to declare war on their local governments, in a feverish attempt to destabilize the situation and drive our brethren to war and conflict between them. This is an embodiment of the U.S. political concept of creating hotbeds of tension and justifications for internal conflict by backing and creating facades, which outwardly seem different and conflicting but are actually united in aim, to harm the concept of true opposition which is exercised by national, pan- Arab, and Islamic forces and to penetrate their ranks and also warn Gulf governments through the infamous policy of making warnings and threats. The report uses the old-new slogan of "democratic life" in order to drive a wedge and instigate conflict between our Gulf kinfolk; that is, between governments and the different forces.

However, another Gulf personality who has divorced politics commented on the report by saying: People in the Gulf have awakened to the U.S. delusion. They say the United States does not care any more, since it is ready to align itself with the devil to keep its interests and ambitions intact. This has increased common hostility to the United States even inside ruling families in the Gulf, especially among youth circles. This problem is tormenting the United States, which is why it tries to attract the sons of some of the ruling families to opposition fronts to help contain and reduce the danger of this hostility in the future. Washington has not stopped interfering in the internal affairs of the Gulf. This vicious report tries to drive a wedge of dispute and conflict even inside ruling families when it says that Washington will avoid any complex and unpredictable local conflicts, especially between members of ruling families.

This is Washington, which wants to divide our Arabian Gulf into locals and aliens through the most hideous policy of sparking civil war. It is obvious that Washington cannot suppress its feelings nor avoid interference in internal Gulf affairs, since it knows that the entire Gulf with all its forces has begun to understand more than before the real aims and intentions of the United States—hence the clear attempts to push our Gulf kinfolk to conflict. A European diplomat commented on these Gulf developments by saying that Washington is trying to plant the Gulf with alien and foreign human bombs via different facades. The United States, he said, is determined to use the "Iranian nuclear terror" as a bugaboo against the Arabian Gulf. The diplomat describes the so-called U.S. measures of following up on and forestalling Iranian nuclear and heavy armament as false propaganda rather than real attempts.

The European diplomat affirms that the Iranian-U.S. partnership covers many fields of coordination and joint action, beginning with the Gulf and Bosnia and ending with North Africa and Iraq. He explains that U.S. intelligence knows full well that Tehran has bought four atomic bombs and quantities of enriched uranium as well as nuclear technology and missiles from different sources. He adds that Maynardiksti [name as transliterated], a nuclear scientist and colleague of David Kay, member of one of the U.S. inspection teams which visit Iraq in the name of the United Nations, said that Iran invests about $4 billion annually in its nuclear program and that Iranians are trying to develop short-range nuclear bombs.

Thus, Washington is playing the card of Iranian nuclear blackmail against the Arab Gulf, benefiting from the ambiguity of the Iranian policy toward the region. Iranian threats are essentially encouraged and protected by the United States. All the banner headlines about Iranian hostility to Washington is a lie which has been exposed by the series of U.S. and Iranian policies and stands.

This situation calls upon our Gulf kinfolk to break the wall of silence. If some of them are satisfied with the policy of no war, no peace, the facts show that this wager is only a cover for the policy of starvation and intimidation against both Iraq and the Arabian Gulf; a policy which portends serious consequences for the entire region. Thus, it is necessary to point out such policies and to warn whoever adopts them that the issue is not simply one of the embargo on Iraq, but of the common destiny and security of everyone inside the joint Iraqi-Gulf house. The most important lesson of the previous years is the need to view matters correctly. Briefly, it is the need to overcome the state of maintaining silence and indulging in the policy of prosecuting Iraq, because it really means prosecuting all our kinfolk in the Arabian Gulf.

Baghdad expressed its wish to send envoys to all Arabs, including Riyadh and Kuwait. Reflection and consideration should be adequate to overcome any desire to harm others. The open role played by UAE President Shaykh Zayid Bin-Sultan Al Nuhayyan, Qatari ruler Shaykh Hamad Bin-Khalifah Al Thani, and the vanguards of the coalition of forces of reason and political realism in our Iraqi-Gulf house is in full harmony with the true pan-Arab concern for the security and destiny of our Iraqi-Gulf family. This role represents a growing trend within Gulf circles which welcome Iraqi initiatives. As a matter of fact, it is now easier to count those who do not favor rapprochement with Iraq than those who favor and back such rapprochement on the Arab and Gulf levels.

The present situation makes it incumbent on everyone in the Arab house, and the joint Iraqi-Gulf house in particular, to say: It is a grave mistake not to support efforts toward common relaxation in the region. Official and public steps in the Gulf as well as Iraqi overtures toward the Gulf all point to one common characteristic — namely, that we have optimistic and tolerant societies which seek general wellbeing and peace and are ready for joint action, and that the present state of tension, starvation, and intimidation will be the shortest period in the life of this region. Peace and accord are not alien to the region. Let everyone unite on the basis of human, social, and historical considerations. Indeed, peace in the Gulf will not only lift the embargo on Iraq, but also open a wide door for a secure and safe future through Iraqi peace, security, and sovereignty. Wisdom and a realistic view of the future will remove all the complexities of politics.

If the Riyadh explosion is any indication of the kind of horror, terror, and anxiety caused by a car bomb, the blockade of our people in Iraq and the intimidation of our brethren and families in the Gulf will only create, on the short term, human bombs which will be difficult to control in the search for security and social and economic safety. It seems that Shaykh Zayid and many others, including Shaykh Hamad Bin-Khalifah Al Thani and Muhammad Bin-Rashid Al Maktum, anticipated such developments. Thus the Riyadh incident has come to confirm their stands and viewpoints on regional security, without which no aspect of national unity will be secure. It is a security theory which must be formulated on the land of our joint Iraqi-Gulf house. The safety valve is in our hand. Freeing our kinfolk of intimidation is possible through political rationalism, which calls for an effective exchange of opinions, interaction, and fruitful initiatives through the mechanisms of private or official joint contacts.

When we meet at any level as brethren and leaders of public opinion within the Iraqi-Gulf family, we must all remember that Washington previously instigated many Algerians not only against the Arab Algerian leadership, but also the Gaulist heirs in Paris. What is taking place in Algeria is essentially a bloody U.S.-French conflict. Chirac and his European partners understand that. So, who knows what future information would bring about the Riyadh explosion and the U.S. or Israeli role in it. Whenever signs of accord and reconciliation appear in the region, the U.S. intelligence bull gets furious and begins planning scare operations and disseminating false reports and lies about an alleged Iraqi danger threatening our kinfolk in the Gulf in order to escalate the state of terror and anxiety and create opportunities for sucking more money by exploiting the Gulf's need for U.S.-Zionist military support and security.

No matter what the future brings, what is most obvious is the gaping hole in the U.S. ship in the Gulf. If the explosion had targeted the command headquarters of a U.S. military mission in charge of training Saudi National Guards which could not guarantee its own security, what kind of security awaits U.S. presence in the region? These are very disturbing questions in the field. These appropriate explosions will be difficult to control if the kinfolk inside the Iraq-Gulf house are not able to resolve their security problem by themselves. Regardless of who claimed responsibility for that operation, the reasons and justifications for that operation are what is important. We do not wish to see explosions in any Gulf or Arab place, but what is most important is to remove the justifications for the explosions before the region enters a circle of absolute chaos on the pattern of the north African scenario. These are the calls of Zayid, Hamad, Al Maktum, and every wise voice in the region. These are the calls of reconciliation and ending the phase of starvation and terror in Iraq and the Gulf. It is the voice of peace and security. The coming days will bring others beside Zayid, Hamad, and Al-Maktum.

Despite all the foul voices which try to exploit the Riyadh explosion in order to reshuffle the cards and create a climate of suspicion by leveling ready made and canned U.S. accusations against the spirit of Arab reconciliation, the comi-tragic attempt by a U.S. diplomat in the Gulf to put the blame on Baghdad or insinuate that it might have been implicated in the Riyadh explosion, is in fact an accusation against and an attempt at stabbing the very spirit of inter-Arab reconciliation. Everyone recalls the U.S. central intelligence scenarios of fanning hostility against the communist threat from Moscow and fabricating the charge of the attempt on the life of the Pope by a Turkish citizen called Agha-jay [name as transliterated] and blaming the then Soviet and Bulgarian intelligence for it. Yet, the facts revealed later that it was U.S. intelligence, helped by the European press, which concocted the whole incident to fan the hostility hysteria against Moscow at the time.

If that was the idea of cloak and dagger operations by the CIA heroes and students against the red enemy, one cannot rule out the possibility of these experts in detective work and propaganda using the same scenario in fanning hostility against Iraq and depicting it as the enemy of the Gulf people. But, if the CIA masters in Langley use this scenario, they would only prove the senility of their secret service for one simple reason; namely, that our kinfolk in the Gulf and the whole world have seen how suicide operations were carried out against FBI offices by fellow Americans and how the FBI and the CIA are bogged down in detective work to try to reveal the dimensions of the octopus, or new revenge seekers on the U.S. arena.

It is an ominous situation which U.S. political and intelligence leaders must tackle with rationalism and realism. The threat is neither Iraqi nor Islamic; it is an explosive threat which springs from the land of U.S. boorishness, arrogance, and selfishness toward other nations' options. If the explosions had occurred in what U.S. political and intelligence jurisprudence considers safe havens; that is, U.S. and Saudi territory, and against the very people who came to train Saudi National Guards on how to watch against the same kind of operations, thus bringing about the downfall of the trainer himself, what would the situation be after a while? There are many persistent questions which even the prowess of the supra-national psychological warfare cannot dismiss away.

What is required is dialogue which will assert that security and peace must stem from a tolerant spirit, common interests, and a balanced and equal view by all.

It is the security and peace of Shaykh Zayid Bin-Sultan Al Nuhayyan and the entire coalition of the forces of reason and realism in the joint Iraqi-Gulf house, our Arab nation, the world, and even inside the U.S. house itself. Let the Americans remember Iraq's offer to help with federal investigations of the World Trade Center case. It is beneficial to listen to the voice of reason and realism, especially now that U.S. politicians are flooding the world with calls for political realism which are simply based on theory. It is important to put that theory into action on the level of international relations and interaction with the social and religious changes taking place in the regions of legitimate common interests.

We hope that the Riyadh explosion will sound the alarm which would awaken those who are asleep to the fact that safe havens might witness even more serious and atrocious [sentence incomplete as published]. It would be useless then to try to find make-shift solutions or level ready made accusations against this or that party. The important thing is to discover the real reasons, which should not adversely affect anyone's vital interests but give more power and legitimacy to those interests within an honest, understandable, and clearly defined international partnership.

It is the call of reason, security, and peace for the sake of everyone's security and peace. Even our brethren in Saudi Arabia understand the facts and know full well that Baghdad is not a threat to them, but a security zone against whoever threatens and disturbs everyone. This is known to all our kinfolk in the joint Iraqi-Gulf house as well as our kinfolk in the Arab house. We do not believe that our kinfolk in Riyadh will be deceived by the ready made, fabricated accusations against Baghdad. The faithful are not bitten twice from the same hole.

Mechanized Division Officer Reportedly Defects to North

MM1312115695 London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 13 Dec 95 p 2

[Unattributed report: "Iraqi Division Chief of Staff Joins Opposition in North"]

[FBIS Translated Text] London, AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT — The Iraqi Broadcasting Corporation, owned by the [Unified] Iraqi National Congress, has revealed that Staff Brigadier Najib Mustafa al-Salihi, chief of staff of the Iraqi Army's 1st Mechanized Division, has joined the opposition in northern Iraq. Brig. al-Salihi's division is the reserve force for the 5th Corps, whose personnel are deployed in the central section of the Iraqi areas adjacent to the Kurdish areas of northern Iraq.

The corporation announced last month that two senior officers, one holding the rank of brigadier, had arrived in the Kurdish areas not under government control. But it did not reveal the two officers' names or their posts in the Iraqi Army.

In a statement distributed yesterday the corporation quoted al-Salihi as saying that he had worked for many years in the opposition ranks inside the Army and "moved to the liberated area in coordination with the Iraqi opposition in order to meet the requirements of national action against Saddam Husayn's regime." He added that he would issue a statement soon to "explain his activities and plans vis-a-vis stepping up action against the regime in coordination with opposition forces."

Opposition Group Questions King Husayn's Intentions

MM1312123595 London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 13 Dec 95 p 2

[Unattributed report: "Iraqi Oppositionists Send Letter to King Husayn"]

[FBIS Translated Text] London, AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT — A group of Iraqi oppositionists have urged King Husayn of Jordan to form a committee "of Iraqi figures known for their integrity, patriotism, affiliation to Iraq, and care for Iraq's unity and people" in order to prepare for the meeting Jordan intends to organize in Amman next month to discuss Iraq's future.

The group sent a letter to King Husayn, of which AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT received a copy yesterday, expressing its support for his call to "change the regime in Baghdad and establish a pluralistic and democratic system that respects and safeguards human rights." However, with reference to the king's call for conducting "dialogue and reconciliation" between the Shi'ah, the Sunnah, and the Kurds, the group said that "the crisis concerning the conflict and power in Iraq is a political crisis in the first place. It is not a sectarian or ethnic crisis." The group urged the Jordanian monarch to clarify what he intended by his statements in this connection, "in order to eliminate the profound concerns of our people and all Iraqi patriots who care for Iraq's unity and people."

With regard to the meeting that Jordan is preparing to hold in Amman next month, the group signing the letter urged the formation of a committee of Iraqi figures to prepare for the meeting. It said that one condition for the meeting's success is "to specify the list of qualifications for representatives of the opposition forces and figures to be invited to the meeting"; and "to limit the meeting's agenda to one main point: discussing the mechanism and the means... that will help to bring about change and topple the regime" in Iraq. "And to draw up general views and principles for the post-regime stage, leaving the major, sensitive, national issue for the Iraqi people to settle in an elected parliament."

The list of those signing the letter includes academicians, politicians, retired officers, doctors, engineers, and businessmen from among Arabs, Kurds, Turkomans, and Assyrians.

In a statement of which AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT [also] received a copy yesterday the "provisional leadership of the Homeland Party" urged King Husayn to "support Iraq's unity." It gave a warning against "the stray people belonging to the Iraqi opposition who have espoused" the plan "to partition the homeland into weak sectarian and ethnic entities."

The statement said that three opposition groups and independent political and military figures had decided to "merge into one organizational formula under the name "the Homeland Party," and that the provisional leadership "has elected Mish'an al-Juburi as its head until the constituent conference is held."

Jordanian Envoy Holds Talks on Transfer of Prisoners

JN1012103295 Amman AL-ASWAQ in Arabic
10 Dec 95 p 1

[FBIS Translated Text] Jordanian Ambassador in Baghdad Bassam Qaqish is currently holding talks with several Iraqi officials on Jordanian prisoners in Iraqi jails. The purpose of the talks is to have approximately 200 prisoners serve the rest of their prison terms at Jordanian rehabilitation centers.

Arab countries signed a judicial agreement in Riyadh stipulating an exchange of prisoners between Arab states according to specific conditions. It is hoped that the talks will result in the transfer of those prisoners to Jordanian rehabilitation centers.

Bid To 'Admit' Israel Into Pharmacists Union Foiled

JN1112150195 Baghdad INA in English
1300 GMT 11 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Baghdad, Dec. 11, INA—Iraq has foiled a draft resolution put forward by some states at the 17th session of the Arab Pharmacists Union, held in Damascus recently. The draft resolution calls for the establishment of a union of pharmacists from Mediterranean countries.

Chairman of Iraqi Pharmacists Union Dr. Ghassan Tahsin told AL-JUMHURIYAH daily the Iraqi delegation reiterated rejection of the draft resolution, which aimed to admit the Zionist entity into the Arab Pharmacists Union.

He said Iraq has adopted a firm position through refusing to discuss the issue in the future because it involves political intentions harmful to the Arab nation.

Minister Addresses al-Basrah Security Officers

JN0712213195 Baghdad AL-THAWRAH in Arabic
30 Nov 95 p 4

[FBIS Translated Text] Interior Minister Muhammad Zimam 'Abd-al-Razzaq affirmed that cooperation between the citizens and the internal security forces will help these forces organize their work successfully. Speaking at a meeting with internal security officers in al-Basrah Governorate, the minister said: Harsh conditions are not only a test of the will, but also an opportunity for righteous citizens to do outstanding and creative work. Moreover, it is an opportunity for pooling resources to foil the plans of the evil enemies and to strengthen the security of the citizens and the prosperity of society. The meeting was attended by al-Basrah Governor Latif Mahal Humud.

Teams Revive Derelict Power Transformers, Machines

JN0812104895 Baghdad AL-QADISIYAH in Arabic
25 Nov 95 p 4

[Report by 'Ali 'Uwayyid]

[FBIS Translated Text] Technical and engineering teams of the State al-Qadisiyah Organization for Electrical Industries continue to revive big power generation and transmission transformers from different places of origin by depending on their own resources and capabilities.

Making this announcement, Director General Diya' has said that his teams have succeeded for the first time in Iraq in reviving big power transformers from different places of origin whose repair was previously monopolized by their original firms. He added: Our teams, which are determined to cross this phase and find adequate means of maintaining the wheel of production and serving Iraqi economic progress, especially in the circumstances of the unjust blockade which has been imposed on our beloved people, have gotten down to repairing both generation and transmission transformers, rendering service to different government departments, and expanding the production capacity of the organization's transformer plant.

Director General Diyad continued: Regarding the precision foundry work project which the organization is implementing in cooperation with other sister organizations, it is hoped that it would be accomplished in the near future. This project, which involves the production of precision parts from aluminum, is being implemented by relying on local alternatives and cannibalizing, revamping, and modifying old and derelict machines.

The director general said that the organization continues its experimental production of electric fans, steam irons, burners, electric heaters, and battery chargers as well as pure oxygen which is used in hospitals, and argon which is used in welding. Our production meets all the public sector's needs of these two items, he said.

The director general explained that his teams have achieved a financial saving of 4.316 million dinars through "Call of the Leader" campaign for reviving old derelict machines and equipment.

Minister on Medical Supply, Russian Aid Plane

JN1012173195 Baghdad AL-'IRAQ in Arabic
2 Dec 95 pp 1,6

[FBIS Translated Text] Baghdad [INA] — Health Minister Dr. Umid Midhat Mubarak has affirmed that UN Security Council Resolution 986, which allows Iraq to export a limited quantity of its oil, will neither end the suffering of Iraqis nor provide them with adequate medicine and food. Speaking to representatives of the Moroccan and Yemeni news agencies as well as the Iraqi News Agency, he said: The mechanism for applying that resolution gives the United Nations and its specialized committees the right to purchase medicine and food from the sources which they determine, regardless of the scientific and medical reputation of the companies which produce and export them. This is a serious matter, since like any other commodity medicine is susceptible to adulteration and its expiration date can be tampered with.

The minister added that Iraq's acceptance of the resolution with its present mechanism would mean keeping the situation as it is, and may be making it even more worse than now, since the annual aid of $23 million received by Iraq would stop under the argument that its financial revenues should enable it to import its medical needs. The minister explained that Resolution 986 sets restrictions on the free movement of medicine from one region to another inside Iraq. Such restrictions, he said, go against logic since the free movement of medicine should be normal; and it is also essential to meet urgent needs or sudden epidemics.

The minister described the attempts to persuade Iraq to accept Resolution 986 in its present form now and discuss it later as a "new fabrication." Acceptance of the aforementioned resolution, he said, means that the embargo will never be lifted. Dr. Umid Midhat Mubarak affirmed that the aforementioned resolution is not adequate to meet even a small part of Iraq's medical and food requirements. He pointed out that before the embargo, Iraq used to import $500 to $600 million worth of medicines and medical supplies annually. He explained: Iraqis now do not only need medicine, but also protection from diseases through the provision of sterilization and purification agents which are now available only in token quantities under the ration card. They are in dire need of drinking water purification agents, whose shortage has led to the widespread of infectious diseases such as cholera, polio, and viral hepatitis, whose incidence have increased 26 times more than what they were before the embargo.

Comparing present health conditions to what they were before the embargo, the minister said: Iraq was most advanced in the field of health care. Its hospitals had 30,000 beds and were equipped with the most up-to-date equipment. It also had strategic reserves of medicines, medical supplies, and spare parts for medical equipment worth $1.25 billion. These supplies were either destroyed in the aggression, stolen and plundered during the chapter of treachery and treason, or became worthless due to expiration.

Referring to the medical assistance which Iraq receives from governmental and non-governmental organizations, the minister said that this assistance is not properly programmed and is inadequate, since it does not meet urgent needs. Nevertheless, the minister expressed his appreciation for the assistance rendered by these organizations. He explained that several Arab states and organizations have recently informed the Iraqi health authorities about their desire to offer medical assistance. He said that Bahrain has offered to send a medical shipment worth $30,000 through the International Committee of the Red Cross and that the Algerian, UAE, and Egyptian Red Crescent Societies have sent medical shipments which are now on their way to Iraq.

The health minister spoke about the reasons which prevented the arrival last Friday of a medical cargo which was a gift from Russia to Iraq. He said that the cargo was scheduled to be transported by a special plane to Baghdad directly. he said that the special plane transporting this cargo of life-saving medicine, Insulin, and children's milk was banned flight by the Sanctions Committee, whose members enjoy veto rights. The reasons are still unknown, he said, but contacts are continuing to insure its arrival in Iraq.

Dr. Umid Midhat Mubarak dealt with the serious effects which the embargo has left on health conditions in Iraq. He said that deaths among newborn infants have risen to 126 out of every 1,000 live births, compared to 24 out of 1,000 before the embargo. He added: The monthly mortality rate among children below the age of five has risen to 6,225, compared to 600 before the embargo. The effects of the embargo are also reflected in the rate of premature births, which are now 23.3 compared to 4.5 percent before the embargo.

Saddam Lauds Truck Tire Retread Project

JN1112180795 Baghdad INA in English
1240 GMT 11 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Baghdad, Dec. 11, INA—President Saddam Husayn has praised efforts made by staff of the Military Industrialization Commission to complete the project of coating truck tyres.

The president was commenting on a telegram by acting director of the Military Industrialization Commission General 'Amir Muhammad Rashid in which he said his staff have inspired their enthusiasm and vigor from President Husayn.

He said the staff of the commission have always contributed to whatever would boost the steadfastness of the patient people of Iraq.

The project was built in a record time, relying on available material, and the machinery that have been idle because of the embargo have been modified in a way as to ensure the production of 24000 tyres a year. Old tyres provide a main part of the material used.

The tyres have proved efficient after a series of tests, and they will solve a major problem of tyre shortage and save large amounts of hard currency.

Paper Reports on Shatt al-'Arab Estuary Seminar

JN0712213295 Baghdad AL-'IRAQ in Arabic
24 Nov 95 p 2

[FBIS Translated Text] Basra — The Martime Sciences Center concluded its special scientific symposium on Shatt al-'Arab estuary with several recommendations. These recommendations mainly include, the need to pass new maritime laws on combating pollution, the need to formulate a plan for controlling and combating pollution, the need to strengthen scientific cooperation between the center and other maritime institutes in the following fields: studying the environment and exploiting the resources of Shatt al-'Arab and Iraqi territorial waters; developing maritime industries, especially boat building and ship repair; and utilizing modern technologies in the control systems for incoming and outgoing vessels to guarantee their safety and easy navigation through internal and regional waters.

The symposium included the discussion of several studies which were presented by experts on maritime affairs. The studies covered the following subjects: the responsibility of oil tanker owners for pollution, the past development stages and future of control systems in Shatt al-'Arab, revision of the sedimentation system in the northwestern region of the Arabian Gulf, study of the hydrological characteristics of Shatt al-'Arab estuary, systems of combating pollution, and the relationship between Arabian Gulf and Shatt al- 'Arab estuary shrimps.

This scientific symposium was held under the slogan: "Toward better exploitation of Shatt al-'Arab's resources for the sake of national economic development."

Ministry Supplies Peasants With 37% More Seed

JN0812101895 Baghdad AL-JUMHURIYAH
in Arabic 25 Nov 95 p 4

[FBIS Translated Text] Tikrit [INA] — Agriculture Minister 'Abd-al-Ilah Hamid Muhammad has announced that this year his ministry has supplied peasants throughout the country with quantities of seed that exceed those of the previous years. He said that peasants are getting 37 percent more than in 1994 in order to make winter 1995 a better season. The minister made the announcement at the plenary meeting of the higher committee in charge of winter cultivation in Salah al-Din which was attended by Trade Minister Dr. Muhammad Mahdi Salih, Salah al-Din Governor Ghazi Ahmad al-Khattab, and the comrade secretaries of the party branch leaderships of Salah al-Din and al-Mu'tasim.

The discussion during the meeting dealt with the cultivation campaign for the present winter season in the governorate, the problems and obstacles facing peasants and the means of overcoming them, and the projected execution percentages.

The minister of agriculture emphasized the need for accurate field statistics and inventories, including the areas under cultivation and the quantities of crops to be delivered by peasants. He said that all this data will be entered in ministry computers for future comparison, since it is on this basis that outstanding peasants will be rewarded and defaulting ones will be published. The meeting was attended by the two deputy governors and several directors general from the two ministries.

Columnist on Poor Baghdad Municipal Services

JN0812080795 Baghdad AL-THAWRAH in Arabic 30 Nov 95 p 7

["Signals" by Yunus Hasan al-Samarra'i: "Man First, O Baghdad Municipality"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Iraqi families have heralded the new law on the reorganization of Baghdad Municipality. The source of their joy is the news conference by the Baghdad mayor and the reorganization that has occurred within the municipality as a result of this law. Our struggler leadership rightly considers this law to be a major source of support for efforts to improve municipal services in our beloved capital.

I must admit that I am also among those who have welcomed the new changes in Baghdad Municipality out of my belief that they would be reflected in the municipal services, water departments, streets, public squares, and the sewage system.

We waited and waited, but the waiting became too long and boring, since waiting without results becomes a delusion. Soon our hopes evaporated and we became very disappointed. This means that we will be facing a harsh winter, and Baghdad will witness hardships which it has never known before.

In order to give you just a small idea of the present municipal services, let me cite the following examples: Before the new municipal law was issued, the garbage truck for Quarter No. 331 used to come by once every fortnight. But since the issuance of this law, the residents there have not seen this truck even once in the quarter's alleys. Before the new law also, al-A'azamiyah Quarter had special containers for collecting garbage. Most of these containers are now nonexistent, since they have been destroyed. Those responsible have not been punished.

Let me cite another example of the lack of serious work and continuity. The water pipe near al-Na'Im Primary School in Quarter No. 331 had burst and the water kept gushing out for a long time. After several appeals, the main street was dug out and the damage repaired, but a big hole was left behind in the middle of the street.

This is why I say that laws and regulations are essential, but what is more essential is the Man who will interpret them into action, depending of course on how loyal and serious he is. We believe that the Man at the municipality has to have high morale before he can begin to repair and beautify Baghdad.

Peres Addresses U.S. Congress

TA1212185895 Jerusalem Israel Television Channel 1 Network in Hebrew 1615 GMT 12 Dec 95

[Address by Prime Minister Shim'on Peres to a joint session of the U.S. Congress in Washington on 12 December — live or recorded, in English]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Mr. Speaker, Mr. Vice President, members of Congress, my very dear friends; I stand before you stunned and humbled. It was but a year ago that, on this very podium, there stood before you — in a partnership of hope — King Husayn and Yitzhaq Rabin. And Rabin is no more.

It was only two years ago that President Bill Clinton hosted in your city Chairman 'Arafat and Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin, and we all witnessed an historic handshake. And Yitzhaq has gone.

Two weeks and twenty years ago, Lyndon Baines Johnson stood on this very spot and said: "All I have, I would have given gladly not to be standing here today."

Mr. Speaker, all I have, I would have gladly given not to be standing here today. My senior partner is gone. Now he belongs to the ages. He will enter them as a great leader, a great soldier, a captain of peace who was assassinated because he was right. That was the reason. I shared with him days of worry and grief. I shared with him hours of reflection and decision. We complemented each other in a determined pursuit of the only objective worthy of the trust bestowed upon us by the people of Israel — to carve a new era of security in peace, to build bridges across the Arab-Israeli divide — an impossible divide. And he, the captain, is no more.

You, dear friends, have honored him in life with an intimate, bipartisan friendship — to the man, to the land, to the cause he represented. You have honored him in death — with your unprecedented presence which moved our hearts. May I tell you, that the fact that the President, two former presidents, the secretary of state, two former secretaries of state, the leaders of the Senate and the House and many of the members, came on this very sad day to stand on our side, is an unforgettable experience in our life. We really thank you. It was great on your part. It will be unforgettable in our history. Hence, I stand before you with one assignment: In the shadowy light of those candles, in the tearful eyes of our young generation, I heard the appeal — nay, the order, "Carry on, carry on!" This is my task.

I stand before you with one overriding commitment — to yield to no threat, to stop at no obstacle in negotiating the hurdles ahead, in seeking security for our people, peace for our land, tranquility for our region. And in so doing, I ask you, ladies and gentlemen, for your support — and, first and foremost, your moral support. That's what counts mostly. Nothing but your own conscience is your guide, and your faith in the Almighty and the moral imperative that guides you.

Yitzhaq and I were always firm believers in the greatness of America, in the ethic and generosity inherent in your history, in your people. For us, the United States of America is a commitment to values before an expression of might. For us, the vast discovery of America is its Constitution even more than its continent — the Constitution enriched by its Biblical foundation. From our school days, we remembered the proposal of John Adams that the imagery of ancient Israel captivated the Constitutional Congress in 1776. We recalled Benjamin Franklin's idea to incorporate into the Great Seal of the new Confederation the image of Moses raising his staff dividing the Red Sea. We remembered Thomas Jefferson suggesting that the image of the children of Israel struggling through the wilderness, led by a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night — that this image be the symbol of the young Republic, to become the great republic.

History did not stop there. The cloud and the fire have accompanied the human experience in this, the most difficult century in the annals of mankind. As the end of the 20th century is nearing, it can verily be described as the American Century. Yes, the century of America. America nurtured a way of life that has made competitive creativeness the engine of economic development practically in every corner of the world. The United States has built strength and used strength to save the globe from three of its greatest menaces: Nazi tyranny, the Japanese militarism and the Communist challenge. You did it. You brought freedom, you defended it. Even is these very days, as Bosnia reeled in agony, you offered a compass and a lamp to a confused situation, like in the Middle East. Nobody else was able, or ready, to do it.

You enabled many nations to save their democracies as you strive now to assist nations to free themselves from their non-democratic past. Your sons and daughters fought many wars; your great armies won many victories. Yet wars did not cause you to lose heart, just as triumphs did not corrupt your system. America remained unspoiled because you rejected the spoils of victory. You have a great Constitution, a vast land, a pluralistic civilization. Israel is a small land, 47 years young, four thousand years deep. Thanks to the support you have given and to the aid you have rendered, we have been able to overcome wars and tragedies thrust upon us and feel today strong to take measured risks to wage our campaign of peace, together with you.

Let me assure you that never shall we ask your sons and daughters to fight instead of us, just as we have never asked you to do so in the past. We shall do our task. We shall employ your support. Indeed, even as I speak before you now, Israeli troops are parting from Palestinian towns and villages in an historic departure, intending never to return there as occupiers. We don't want to occupy anybody. This for us is a victory of moral commitment and, for the Palestinians, a victory of self-respect. For the first time in their history, they are governing themselves and we are governing ourselves too. Nobody forced us to do so. Nobody forced us to take these measures. And Israel is neither weak nor afraid. Our choice was freely made. What we have accomplished in resonant of your own tradition, we have given, like you preference to a Biblical ethic. We are true to the old pages [the Bible]. Yet like you, we have rejected the temptation to rule over another people even though we have pussessed the force to do so.

Before coming here, I visited King Husayn, a real friend of the United States. We discussed the possibilities of transforming the Jordan Rift Valley, which is in fact an elongated extended desert, into a Tennessee Valley. We learned from you again. In a single bold sweep, we are and remain resolved to turn back the desert, to stop the war, to end the hatred, once and forever. I then met with President Mubarak in a highly congenial atmosphere. We agreed to put aside certain bitter memories and to postpone certain disputed issues for a future date. We have time in the future to disagree. Now we have to agree.

Then I met Chairman 'Arafat and his expression of condolence had the ring of a sincere desire for peace. May I tell you, nothing convinced the Israeli people about the sincerity of the Arabs seeking peace more than the sympathy and condolence they expressed when they learned of the assassination of Rabin; a sad event, a revealing sentiment. 'Arafat is engaged in the new realities of his people and he has conveyed to me the solemn promise to intensify his fight against terror which is, today, as much a danger to him as it is to the peace we are committed to achieving together. I, on my part, have promised to release prisoners in our custody, as agreed, so as to enable them to participate in the free elections scheduled, for the first time in history, to take place on January 20th, 1995. As far as we are concerned, democracy, and that includes Palestinian democracy, is the best and probably the only guarantee for a real and durable peace. Freedom supports peace. I believe in the prospect. Three years ago, such a prospect would have been considered a fantasy. That was part of the accusation against me. Now reality is on our side. All this would hardly have been attainable were it not for the American involvement and support for our efforts.

President Clinton and his administration, the leadership and members of Congress, and the American people at large have made possible the dawn of peace to rise again over the ancient horizon, over the ancient skies of the promised land, and bring promise again to the land. And by so doing, you have removed the terrifying prospect of evil hands grabbing hold of unconventional weapons.

Mister Speaker, members of congress: International terrorism is a threat to us all. Fundamentalism with a nuclear bomb is the nightmare of our age. We have to stop it. We understood that in order to ready ourselves to confront the new dangers we would have to put a stop to the enmity with our neighbors. In our time, more than there are new enemies, there are new dangers. The dangers of our days are not confined to borders; they are common to us all — Muslims, Christians and Jews alike.

Therefore, we have to try and achieve a comprehensive peace. Peace with Syria and Lebanon, the two remaining adversaries on our borders, may well prove to be the greatest contribution to the construction of a new Middle East, of a new era in the Middle East. The hurdles are many. We have to negotiate a mountain of suspicion. We have to traverse a chasm of prejudice. We have to find solutions to an array of genuinely conflicting interests. The are not artificial. Israel, for its part, is ready to go, and try, and win.

In October next year, Israel will go to elections. I here declare that the decision to strive for the peace shall be pursued regardless of it. To win peace is more important than to win elections. We shall try wholeheartedly. We shall try to forge the peace with Syria and Lebanon expeditiously so that, before the curtain of the 20th century shall fall, we shall see, all of us, [Government Press Office version does not contain previous three words] the emergence of a Middle East of peace.

Mister Speaker: With your permission, therefore, I would like to use this podium, with your permission ladies and gentlemen, to turn to President al-Asad of Syria and say to him: Without forgetting the past, let us not look back. Let fingertips touch a new untested hope. Let each party yield to the other, each giving consideration to the respective needs of the other — mutually so — he to us, we to him. Without illusion but with resolve, we stand ready to make demanding decisions — if you are, if al-Asad is. We stand ready to work relentlessly until all gaps are bridged — if you are, if al-Asad is. I believe we face an historic opportunity, perhaps of galloping nature. If we shall find the language of peace between us, we can bring peace to all of us.

Surely, nothing would capture the imagination of young people everywhere than a gathering of all of us standing together and declaring — and when I say all of us I mean all the leaders of the Middle East, all the 20 of them, not one by one but together — and declaring the end of war, the end of conflict, carrying the message to our forefathers and to our grandchildren, that we are again, all of us, the sons and daughters of Abraham, living in a tent of peace again. We shall tell them together as partners we are going to build a new Middle East, a prosperous economy; that we are going to raise the standard of living, not the standard of violence. We have had enough violence, not enough the right way to live. What we are going to introduce is light and hope to our peoples to their destinies.

Mister President, Mister Speaker: Permit me a personal word. In my country, I have shouldered almost every responsibility. I have tasted almost every title. I have served in almost every position. Today, I wish only one thing — to bear the burden of peacemaking.

At the last moment of his life — his happiest — Yitzhaq Rabin stood in that Tel Aviv square, me standing on his side and singing, he was singing the Song of Peace. The singer, alas, is not with us. The song remains. You cannot kill the Song of Peace.

Now distinguished members of the Congress, I say it sincerely, that I have come here for your advice and consent. I hazard the thought that the world cannot permit itself to be without American leadership in these trying times. Not only in the Middle East, all over the place. America, in my judgment, cannot escape what history laid on your shoulders. You cannot escape what America alone can do. America alone can keep the world free and assist nations to assume the responsibility for their own fate. Please continue. Go ahead and do it. As you did for the whole century, the next century is awaiting your leadership as well.

In this spirit, I can do no better that to quote what Yitzhaq Rabin said to you when he stood on this rostrum a year ago: "No words can express our gratitude to you for the years of your generous support, understanding and cooperation which are all beyond compare in modern history." And then he said "Thank you America." I, too, say "thank you America" — for what you are, for what you have been and for what you shall yet be. And in so doing, I conclude with a prayer: May the Almighty spread His wings of loving kindness and His tabernacle of peace over the Land of Israel. May He grant His light and truth to all the leaders of our region, to all the leaders of America, to all the leaders of our time. Venatata Shalom Ba'aretz Vesimahta 'Olam Veyoshveya [And you will give peace unto the land, and bring joy to its inhabitants].

Mr. Speaker, thank you very much.

Peres Comments on Syria Proposals, Condemns Iran

TA1312090395 Tel Aviv HA'ARETZ in Hebrew 13 Dec 95 pp A1, A10

[Report by special correspondents in Washington 'Aqiva Eldar and Aluf Ben]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Prime Minister Shim'on Peres presented U.S. President Bill Clinton at their 11 December meeting with a proposal for an "interim deal" with Syria. The deal is to include de facto recognition by Israel of the Syrian presence in Lebanon and to enable Israel to pull out of south Lebanon in return for guarantees of stability in Lebanon and security for Israel. A senior Israeli source confirmed in a conversation with HA'ARETZ last night that the proposal, which was communicated to Clinton in a tete-a-tete at the Oval Office, is supposed to be a key element in the arrangement with Syria.

Peres ended his U.S. visit yesterday. Prior to the departure for Israel, he had another meeting with U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher who will begin a shuttle tour in Damascus and Jerusalem at the end of this week. [passage omitted]

Peres told Clinton that he does not insist on any negotiating format and submitted instead a "basket of ideas" for U.S.-mediated bilateral and multilateral negotiations. He noted that the negotiations can take place in the United States or the Middle East and stressed that neither Israel nor Syria has to present any conditions or positions. The prime minister did insist, however, that all disputed issues are to be negotiated concurrently.

Israel prefers the initial negotiations to be conducted by two- or three-member teams on each side. In the next stage, the talks are to split into working groups, each dealing with an issue (territory versus normalization, security, water, and economy). Peres added that the negotiations will not be finalized without direct senior-level talks.

The Americans said in their talks with Peres and his aides that there are six months in which a peace agreement with Syria can be achieved, and that after that, the President would find it difficult to devote time to international affairs. A senior Israeli source said in a conversation with American columnists that the Syrians have failed to show sufficient openness on the territorial issue, as well as the psychological level.

The source said that President Clinton had told Peres that he hears "new music" coming from Damascus, although it is still "pink envelopes" rather than more positive content. The senior source speculated that the assassination of Yitzhaq Rabin has made the Syrians more aware of the difference between the Likud and Labor. He noted that while everyone is aware of the payment al-Asad expects to receive, people ignore al-Asad's side of the transaction. He added that al-Asad may be interested in an offer to be the man who brings comprehensive peace to the Middle East.

Speaking at a news conference yesterday, Shim'on Peres said it was too soon to pledge a full withdrawal from the Golan: "Rabin stated publicly that the depth of our withdrawal will equal the depth of peace Syria offers us. You do not have to be a mathematics student to understand what that means." Asked why he would not spell out what he meant, Peres replied: "The time to say that has not yet come."

Peres further said that "the Golan Heights are the last mountain we have, and we will not negotiate over it before we are certain that it will really change the situation." He asserted that the idea was to conclude the negotiations with a signing ceremony attended by the leaders of some 20 Arab countries and by President Clinton. He said that it will not happen overnight, but that the problems can be solved and obstacles overcome within a short time. [passage omitted]

Speaking at the news conference, the prime minister sharply attacked Iran: "Iran is the greatest threat to Israelis, Arabs, and to peace, inside and outside the Middle East. They cheat, lie, and carry out murderous attacks everywhere, and they finance, organize, and command Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] and the Islamic Jihad. They bring death, they are trying to procure a nuclear option, and this combination of an evil spirit with nonconventional weapons is the greatest danger of all."

A senior Israeli source said in Washington last night that Israel would like the U.S. Embassy to move to Jerusalem as soon as possible, because "the sooner the Arabs get used to it, the better." According to him, this was the right decision, because Israel cannot compromise over Jerusalem, which is a historic, rather than strategic issue. He noted that even the Arabs do not demand that Israel withdraw from Jerusalem, only that Jerusalem become the capital of two nations. [passage omitted]

Baraq Comments on Peres-Clinton Meeting

TA1212191295 Tel Aviv Educational Television Network in Hebrew 1500 GMT 12 Dec 95

[Interview with Foreign Minister Ehud Baraq by anchor Dan Margalit in the Jerusalem studio "several minutes ago" — recorded]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Margalit] During the last 48 hours everybody has been dealing with the talks with Syria, but would it be wrong to say that all-in-all everything that had to be said on the Israeli-Syrian track has already been said, whether through the Americans or in your own and Chief of Staff Shahaq's contacts with General al-Shihabi?

[Baraq] I do not think it is accurate to say that everything has already been said. I think that what happened in Washington yesterday was extremely important. I spoke with the prime minister a short time ago, and earlier today I spoke with Uri Savir and Itamar Rabinovich. I believe the talks were important and very successful. They made it clear that Israel is extremely open in everything having to do with procedures and is actually willing to facilitate the process on all possible tracks. We would have preferred a summit meeting, but if any kind of preparatory talks or a shuttle mission by Christopher are required, this too is possible.

[Margalit] Do you believe that this is what will actually take place?

[Baraq] Christopher will arrive here this weekend, and I believe there will be some sort of preparatory contacts as well. I do not know yet precisely in what format Syria will seek to forge ahead, if it decides to move forward. The other significant thing is that the prime minister explained to the President — as we have already explained to Dennis Ross — that Israel is extremely open and is willing to expand the range of issues being discussed to include a discussion over full peace which, if it arrives, can put an end to the state of war between us and the Arab world.

[Margalit] Returning to the Israeli-American level, is there an Israeli-American understanding and coordination as there have been over the last year or year and a half?

[Baraq] I believe there will continue to be coordination on the political level as well as chemistry between the leaders, as we have seen over the last few years. This is an extremely important thing. I believe that the Americans are fulfilling a very objective and judicious role in order to express the Syrian interests as well.

[Margalit] Did the prime minister tell you what he proposed to President Clinton or what the Americans will propose to Syria on our behalf?

[Baraq] The prime minister told me, but you do not expect me to say this on television. In my opinion at this stage there are some things we cannot tell Syria because it is too early. We are certainly waiting to see how Syria reacts to the entire issue and how open it is to the concept of full, open, and warm peace with all this implies. Naturally, the Syrians and we realize that both sides have security interests and that together we will have to see how to bring about a balanced and responsible result.

[Margalit] As a lieutenant general in the reserves and foreign minister let me ask you this: Yesterday you told the Knesset Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee that the depth of withdrawal from the Golan Heights will equal the quality of peace and the strength of the security arrangements. Does this mean that if you become convinced that the Israeli-Syrian peace resembles the U.S.-Canadian peace you will maintain that we do no need any land or other arrangements?

[Baraq] I do not want to draw this conclusion, but it is obvious that there is a link; it is obvious that in a peace like that between the United States and Canada totally different kinds of security arrangements and early warning capability is called for. I also do not believe it is possible to immediately attain such peace relations as those existing between the United States in Canada. If, however, we feel the opening is leading in this direction and that the practical steps on the ground include open borders, tourism, a mutual working-out of the water problem, mutual economic projects, and other things which will prevent both sides from initiating any kind of belligerent action while encouraging and rewarding peace moves.... [pauses] Open and deep peace arrangements as those existing between the countries of Europe or North America are an extremely significant long-term security component.

[Margalit] The arrangements between these countries, however, do not include early warning stations.

[Baraq] I do not think it is proper to speak, at this point, about early warning stations or other arrangements. In the framework of the security arrangements, however, we include an extremely broad spectrum of issues such as thinning out of forces, demilitarization, mutual control, the exchange of intelligence photographic material, telephone hot lines — there is an extensive series of issues on the basis of which we should work out the security issue, and this obviously includes early warning stations. We know that this issue is yet to be discussed.

[Margalit] Can the arrangements we have with Egypt be satisfactory in terms of our relations with Syria?

[Baraq] No. It is impossible to borrow these arrangements as they stand. A 200-km-wide desert separates us and Egypt, and behind this desert there is a canal which nets Egypt $1.5 billion a year and some 1 million Egyptians live along this canal. All of this, to repeat, at a distance of some 200 km from Israel. This is not similar. We must find the measures which will provide us with the three things we want to attain through the security arrangements: One, making a sudden attack an impractical prospect — this is an extremely important thing about which I cannot elaborate in a brief television interview. Two, lowering the chances or incentive for an all-out attack. Three, preventing a situation wherein daily friction of the kind we face in Lebanon leads to a general deterioration in the situation. We must pay attention to these three issues. Technical arrangements between the two sides will not suffice — the very nature of peace has great influence here.

Savir Comments on Options Presented by Peres

TA1312083595 Tel Aviv IDF Radio in Hebrew 0500 GMT 13 Dec 95

[Report by political correspondent Udi Segal in Washington]

[FBIS Translated Text] Israel will agree to any format of negotiations with Syria. Prior to his departure from Washington, Prime Minister Shim'on Peres met with U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher to finalize the presentation of his proposals to Hafiz al-Asad. Peres had presented several negotiating alternatives to Clinton: talks in working teams; talks within a tripartite framework; bilateral talks; upgrading the negotiations; and continued U.S. shuttle tours. Al-Asad can have his pick. Peace talks coordinator Uri Savir:

[Begin Savir recording] If they want to make faster progress, there is one way to do it, and if they want to move more slowly, there is another option. Syria will not be doing Israel a favor by making peace. If it is as interested as we are, there are ways to promote the negotiations more rapidly. We are positive that the negotiations should be comprehensive, and we think, judging by the Syrian response so far, that they do not rule out the comprehensive approach, rather than discussing one issue after another. We are flexible with regard to the format, because the matter depends on the other party, too. [end recording]

Israel is waiting to see what approach al-Asad will present to Warren Christopher. Uri Savir says that if progress is to be achieved, things cannot advance millimeter by millimeter. The entire perception should change. Like Peres, Savir speaks of the last chord — comprehensive regional peace — and rejects the charges that the proposal is merely a colorful envelope designed to sell the public on peace with Syria.

[Begin Savir recording] Would you describe peace and diplomatic relations with 20 Arab countries as public relations? They would reflect a profound change in Israel's standing in the region and in the international arena and transform the Israeli economy. Just think of the economy. We just started economic ties with Oman; they are possible with Saudi Arabia, and perhaps with the entire Gulf and Maghreb — with Syria, too. That is real peace. We will settle for no less. [end recording]

Yesterday Peres was again asked about the price. The formula remains the depth of the withdrawal's matching the depth of peace, and you do not have to be a mathematics genius to understand the meaning of that, Peres replied. He was asked: Then why not state that you mean full withdrawal from the Golan Heights? Peres replied: The time for that has not yet come.

Peres is leaving the United States after securing the full support of the U.S. Administration and President Bill Clinton's personal pledge of commitment. At this time his plane is on its way to Morocco, where he will pay a brief visit to King Hassan II en route home.

ISA 'Not Enthusiastic' About Clinton Proposal

TA1212192595 Jerusalem Israel Television Channel 1 Network in Hebrew 1800 GMT 12 Dec 95

[Gil Tamari video report]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Israel Space Agency [ISA] sources are not enthusiastic about President Clinton's proposal to send an Israeli astronaut into space. The sources say they prefer that the Americans involve ISA in technological projects in which it could make a real contribution. Our correspondent Gil Tamari visited ISA today:

[Begin recording] [Tamari] Welcome to ISA. Yes, there is such a thing, but the Israeli counterpart to NASA employs only three persons. Interestingly enough, Clinton's statement about an Israeli astronaut is seen here as something of a gimmick.

[Unidentified ISA official] I am not overly enthusiastic about this and none of my friends in the space community with whom I consulted jumped with joy.

[Tamari] Israel's speciality is in the field of satellites. Israel is a member of an exclusive club of eight countries in the world that can build and launch satellites.

[Official] We do not pretend to be able to launch spaceships and we have no courses for astronauts. [passage omitted] [end recording]

Shahal: Peace May Stop If Attacks Continue

TA1212192695 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in English 1500 GMT 12 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] If terrorist attacks increase in the Hebron area, Israel may have to consider stopping the peace process. This warning came from Moshe Shahal, the minister of internal security, who said there may be no choice but to expand the authority of the police in Judaea and Samaria and send in reinforcements. He said the cabinet would discuss at its meeting tomorrow the burning of Israeli flags in Nabulus. According to Shahal, giving in on this issue would encourage further violations of the agreement.

Study Views Dangers of Golan Withdrawal

TA1112110995 (Internet) Golan Report in English 11 Dec 95

["Golan Myths and Facts" by Dr. Aaron Lerner, "associate" of Independent Media Review and Analysis, IMRA, of Kefar Saba; dated 10 December]

[FBIS Transcribed Text]

MYTH: THE GULF WAR DEMONSTRATES THAT AMERICA CAN EFFECTIVELY RESPOND AS ISRAEL'S "DEFENDER OF LAST RESORT" IF THE TREATIES ARE VIOLATED.

When Iraq entered Kuwait America was not able to stop the action by simply launching some missiles towards Baghdad. Kuwait was occupied for many months before the world took effective action. During that time, the women were raped and the men tortured — some were even killed. But no matter how bad the Iraqi occupation of Kuwait was, it would look like a party in comparison to the holocaust which the Jewish people would endure while the Allies decided what to do.

If anything, the aftermath of the Gulf War serves to encourage such action in the future. The declared enemy of the world, Saddam Husayn, still sits in Baghdad. A few years after being "bombed back to the stone age" it was possible to completely rebuild the infrastructure despite a boycott. Many in the world press today to lift all sanctions even though Iraq has every intention to continue its programs to develop non-conventional weapons. All this has been duly noted by al-Asad and Israel's other neighbors.

It should also be noted that, in many respects, the Gulf War was a "last hurrah" for American power. A substantial part of the equipment expended in the war was not replaced. Force levels since that war have also not been maintained.

MYTH: THE GULF WAR PROVES THAT STRATEGIC DEPTH AND GROUND FORCES ARE IRRELEVANT.

"There are those who say that the Gulf War proved that territory has no value, that the missiles reach everywhere. To all of those I say: ask the Kuwaitis if land has no value. Victory in war is achieved by conquering territory and ground fighting, and not in the launching of missiles. Therefore, anyone who wants to prevent losing in war, has to be able to win in the ground battle." (Minister of Health Efrayim Sne (Labor), HA'ARETZ, 4 August 1994)

"The Golan Heights has a very important strategic value and no sophisticated weapon and no electronic system can replace it if we have to go to war." (Chief of Staff Major General Amnon Lipkin Shahaq, Qol Yisra'el Radio, 10 December 1995)

When asked by Ben-Yishay what force will dominate the future battlefield, (then IDF [Israel Defense Forces] Chief of Staff and now Foreign Minister) Ehud Baraq did not even mention missiles but rather said "I am certain, that in the foreseeable future, the heavy armored units will stand in the center of our land battles with tanks playing the key role, this without denigrating of course the critical role of the air force and to a certain degree also the navy." (YEDI'OT AHARONOT, 23 December 1994)

Dore Gold (THE JERUSALEM POST, 27 May 1994) writes that "much of the new technology Israel would need after a Syrian accord might not be as effective as first thought." Gold cites, for example, a CIA finding that air attacks against several divisions of the Iraqi Republican Guard succeeded in eliminating fewer than 20% of their tanks (166 out of 846).

Spy satellites are also limited as there is much evidence that periodic rather than continuous observation is problematic. Writing in the Jan/Feb 1994 issue of FOREIGN AFFAIRS, Elliot A. Cohen ("The Mystique of U.S. Air Power") writes about "the sheer difficulty of knowing what damage had been done. From an overhead photograph, for example, it may prove difficult to figure out whether a small black hole on top of a hardened aircraft shelter indicates a hit by a dud bomb, an explosion in the thick, rubble filled space between the shelter's inner and outer walls, an explosion within the shelter or an artful paint job by "camouflage experts."

In point of fact, as far as Israel is concerned, American technology was a dismal failure during the Gulf War: the Patriot missiles failed to intercept even one Iraqi Scud and American technology failed to destroy or even keep track of the Scud missile sites.

MYTH: AS LONG AS ISRAEL HAS NUCLEAR WEAPONS SYRIAN ARMS AREN'T RELEVANT.

While nuclear weapons certainly have a deterrent effect, they are of limited value in addressing a security challenge which erodes Israel's position on a piecemeal basis. Simply put: When can Israel justify a nuclear response? After the first Syrian soldier crosses the border?, Syria occupies the Galilee?, Haifa?

MYTH: AN AMERICAN-ISRAEL MUTUAL DEFENSE WOULD DETER ARAB ATTACKS.

The Arab states would not be deterred by threats of American retaliation, knowing full well that if Israel falls, America's primary interest would not be to punish those who destroyed her but rather to insure the stability of the region and the uninterrupted supply of Middle Eastern oil. And nothing would contribute more to the destabilization of the post-Israel Middle East than to create a power vacuum by punishing the powers who destroyed the Jewish State.

MYTH: SINCE THE BREAK UP OF THE USSR THE ARABS HAVE NO ALTERNATIVE TO AMERICA.

Russia continues to supply both new arms and spare parts to Syria. The Russians have already provided the Syrians with tens of millions of dollars of arms credit. (HA'ARETZ, 8 March 1995)

Russia's role in the development of an Arab nuclear capability is even more ominous.

MYTH: A "FULL PEACE" AGREEMENT WITH SYRIA WILL BRING STABILITY.

"The elite which rules relies on a small minority in Syrian society, the 'Alawites (around 13% of the population), which derives its legitimacy, in part, from the ideology of the struggle with Zionism and defense of Pan-Arab interests. Regimes of this type generally find their ultimate legitimacy in struggle.... Peace with Israel, open borders, free tourism, embassies and flags, the end of the ideological tension with Zionism — has only one meaning: the beginning of the end of Ba'ath rule in Syria.

How does, if at all, an agreement with Israel jibe with the stability of the regime and its survival — this is the central dilemma of al-Asad." (Shlomo Ben-'Ami, HA'ARETZ, 28 April 1995)

Paradoxically, withdrawal from the Golan, by slashing the time available to effectively respond to a Syrian threat, may ultimately leave the IDF with no choice but to carry out a preemptive strike against Syria even when the Syrian moves are subject to interpretation.

MYTH: THE SYRIAN ARMY IS WEAK.

"Quantitatively, the Syrian army now matches the IDF; in certain areas, such as tanks and surface-to-surface missiles, the Syrians even have a slight advantage over the IDF. Qualitatively, the IDF still maintains a clear advantage in terms of equipment and personnel, but this advantage is reduced by the fact that the IDF is comprised mostly of reservists. On the other hand, the Syrian military is mostly comprised of a standing force — able to move straight from its permanent bases, whether to halt or launch an attack."

"Syria's growing strength is a fact. Therefore, in any agreement with Syria, according to which Israel will withdraw from its current positions on the Golan Heights, Israel must ensure that Syria's growing power does not endanger it, even if extremist factors, that oppose the peace agreement, take power in Syria." "Therefore, the security arrangement must include significant arms-and missile- control elements, the demilitarization of broad areas, and international supervision of the operation of weapons systems capable of threatening and surprising Israel."

"It would be desirable if the prime minister would change his declaration a little, and instead of determining that "the depth of the withdrawal be proportional to the depth of the normalization and peace," he should now say to the Syrians: "The depth of the withdrawal will be proportional to the depth of the security arrangements," Otherwise, any change in Syria and its regime would require Israel to move to alert status under conditions that are much more difficult than those which prevail today." (Ron Ben- Yishay, YEDI'OT AHARONOT, 16 September 1994)

"The Syrian Army continues to seriously exercise as if there is no peace process. Syria has a difficult time buying military equipment from the CIS, because of the need to pay in cash, but she buys weapons in the East.... If the president of Syria should decide to go to war, he will receive the recommendation to do so from his military commanders, as their training program continues and the Syrian Army is still considered strong and skilled." (O.C. Northern Command Maj. Gen. 'Amiram Levin, HA'ARETZ 17 April 1995)

"What concerns me no less than the Scud C's is that Syria is involved in — and this also is not new — the manufacture of chemical weapons. Weapons which, when tied to the Scud C, are, from the standpoint of the State of Israel, a matter which most certainly deserves attention." (Chief of Staff Amnon Lipkin Shahaq, MA'ARIV, 3 May 1995)

According to a study of chemical weapons by Dr. Dani Shoham of the Begin-al-Sadat Center for Strategic Studies at Bar-Ilan University, Syria today is the strongest military power in the Arab world in the area of chemical weapons. The Syrians have produced thousands of chemical bombs as well as a well-developed delivery capability including both attack planes and Scud B missiles (100 to 200). Recently the Syrians began producing the longer range Scud C and possibly the M9 missiles in cooperation with Iran, North Korea and China. Using these longer range missiles, the Syrians will be able to strike literally every point in Israel from any location in Syria.

Critics of the current Israel-Syria negotiations point to the fact that Israel has apparently dropped its demands for any reduction in Syria's military strength as part of an overall peace agreement, thereby allowing the Syrians to not only maintain but actually enhance their chemical weapons threat on Israel in the future. They also note that while Prime Minister Peres frequently speaks of Syria joining in a coalition against the Islamic fundamentalists, that in practice the Syrians view Iran as a strategic ally and partner — as evidenced by their cooperation in missile production. (HA'ARETZ, 26 May 1995)

If anything, peace with Israel will enable Syria to tilt the balance of power in its favor. If Syrian-Israeli relations follow the pattern of the Egyptian-Israeli experience, Syria will enjoy open access to the most sophisticated of Western arms supplies after it signs an agreement with Israel.

MYTH: SYRIA'S GOAL IS PEACE

Speaking in Washington at a press conference on Friday October 7, 1994, Syrian Foreign Minister Faruq al-Shar' explained that the decision to make peace with Israel is a "strategic choice". Minister al-Shar' studied in America and has a good command of the English language. His choice, therefore, of the term "strategic" is not by chance.

"Strategy" is a means to achieve a given goal. Minister al-Shar' is saying publicly that peace with Israel is not in and of itself a "goal" but rather a "means". What then is Syria's goal?

Prime Minister Shim'on Peres provides the answer to this puzzle when he explains that the Arabs decided to negotiate with Israel when they realized that they could not destroy Israel on the battlefield. And so, there has been no change in the Syrian goal. The goal of erasing the Jewish State from the map. There is only a change in tactics.

Despite the pleasant cover of words of peace, in both the press conference and the interview later with Israel Television's Ehud Ya'ari, the Syrian Foreign Minister termed the very establishment of the State of Israel as an act of aggression against the Arab people. And, as he warned, as long as Israel sits on occupied lands the Syrian nation will say "this is surrender, this is not peace."

MYTH: THE PERES GOVERNMENT'S PEACE AGREEMENT WITH SYRIA ADDRESSES THE SYRIAN MISSILE THREAT.

"Rabin has made clear in recent weeks that he will not insist on a reduction in the Syrian Army, since there is no precedent to it in the agreement with Egypt, and since it is impossible to differentiate between conventional and nuclear forces." (HA'ARETZ' diplomatic correspondent Aluf Ben, HA'ARETZ, 1 May 1995) This is not a minor issue.

"Former Mosad Chief Yitzhaq Hofi told a symposium on Israel-Syria Relations last night that demilitarization and foreign forces cannot be relied on as adequate security arrangements and that the only way that Israel could justify a withdrawal is if Syria makes a serious reduction in forces of as much as 80%."

"With that, Hofi also pointed out that Iraq sits on Syria's border and has participated in every war against Israel. Hofi maintained that Israel should be on the alert for an attack from Syria or Iraq in the future, taking into account the fact that al- Asad won't rule forever." (HA'ARETZ & THE JERUSALEM POST, 15 November 1994)

MYTH: AL-ASAD KEEPS HIS WORD.

"Speaking to reporters on Tuesday, Foreign Minister Shim'on Peres commented on Syrian denials of involvement in terror activities in Southern Lebanon by noting that 'those who support terror don't necessarily support truth'. (GLOBS (business paper) 14 December 1994)

"Al-Asad's 20-year pattern of behavior establishes that he regularly breaks his promises. Typical of a despot, he keeps his word when it's convenient and breaks it when not." (Daniel Pipes, THE JERUSALEM POST, 19 August 1994). Among the examples cited by Pipes are PKK [Workers Party of Kurdistan] anti-Turkish activities originating from Syria in violation of security protocols signed in 1987 and 1992 between Syria and Turkey and the illegal placement of 21 surface-to-air missiles and eight missile launchers in the "thin out" strip within 25 kilometers of the border with Israel.

MYTH: AMERICA CAN BE RELIED UPON TO SHARE COMMON INTEREST IN CASE OF SYRIAN VIOLATIONS.

The principle goal of Israel is to survive. But the continued existence of the Jewish State is not the prime goal of America. The United State's principle interest is the maintenance of order in the region.

As Henry Kissinger told President Nixon during the Suez Canal Egyptian missile crisis (1970), "Israel, with her survival at stake, cannot afford to take chances.... We, on the other hand, have an incentive to minimize such evidence (of violation of the cease fire agreement between Egypt and Israel (IMRA], since the consequences of finding violations are so unpleasant. Violations force us to choose between doing something about them and thus risk the blow-up of the initiative; or doing nothing and thus renege on our promises to Israel, posing the threat of her taking military action." (Henry Kissinger, "White House Years," page 587).

MYTH: AMERICAN TROOPS CAN BE AN EFFECTIVE "TRIP-WIRE" FOR PEACE.

The way that you "trip" the American "trip-wire" is by killing American soldiers. This was the entire principle of NATO. The Europeans feared that the U.S. would never unleash its nuclear arsenal just to defend them and hoped that a thousand dead American G.I.'s would get the U.S. angry enough to launch their missiles.

So that's the rule about trip-wire troops: You can drive by them, fly over them, do anything you want — just so long as you don't kill any of them.

The American trip wire does not work in Israel's favor:
a) If Syria invades via Lebanon, it won't be "tripped".
b) If Syria shoots missiles over the American's heads, it won't be "tripped".
c) If Syrian bulldozers push American jeeps off the road — but don't kill any Americans — it still won't be "tripped".

The talk of the American trip-wire forces in the Golan reminds one of the most heroic episode in the ill-fated American presence in Lebanon: the American officer who, standing alone with a simple handgun, was able to stop a column of Israeli tanks. He could do that because he knew that an Israeli would not dare run him over. The Syrians, no doubt, would play a much better game of "chicken".

MYTH: THE UNITED STATES IS COMMITTED TO MAINTAINING ISRAEL'S MILITARY SUPERIORITY.

"It is necessary to consider as uncertain all of the declarations of President [Clinton] regarding aid to Israel and his help to limit the risks of peace." (Position paper presented to Foreign Minister Shim'on Peres by the Planning Department of the Foreign Ministry on Thursday, 10 November 1994 (HA'ARETZ, 11.11.94)

America's arms policy is based on circular reasoning: The U.S. will not hurt Israel's military superiority, therefore any sales which the U.S. makes to the Arabs cannot, by definition, hurt Israel's position, since otherwise the U.S. would not make the sale.

The U.S. continually demonstrates that it is not serious about this commitment. Last year the U.S. approved Saudi participation in the EYEGLASS satellite project — over the objection of their own security establishment. The opportunity to get Saudi money injected into the American project was simply more important than security concerns. Israeli officials were stunned by the American move and only after much effort was the plan halted.

Now the Clinton Administration plans to sell sophisticated air- to-air missiles to the UAE and anti-tank TOW-2B missiles to Kuwait. Israel opposes the sales, terming them a "technological jump" for the Arabs which could find its way into unfriendly hands in the future. Israeli opposition has been silenced by promises to offset the sale, further escalating the regional arms race.

The U.S. also is interested in limiting Israel's independent ability to produce weapons. The U.S. State Department objects to the participation of Israel Aircraft Industries in a military tender to launch satellites on the grounds that it does not want to encourage the development of missiles in Israel (HA'ARETZ, 20 November 1995).

In the past the United States has threatened to withhold vital technology to Israel in order to force the Jewish State to change her policies. This activity runs completely counter to the American commitment to maintain Israel's edge.

"(Deputy Defense Minister Mordekhay) Gur implied that territorial concessions were unavoidable due to U.S. pressure and Israel's need for US military technology. The key to winning a war these days is technology, not territory, he said.

'We don't want to reach a situation (where we have to choose) between the U.S. and the Golan, between certain weapons systems and part of the Golan,' he said. 'We don't want to reach a state where we are facing an ultimatum.'" (THE JERUSALEM POST, 14 September, 1994)

The late Prime Minister Rabin is no stranger to this darker side of American diplomacy. He was Prime Minister in 1975 when President Ford decided to "reassess" U.S. policy in the Middle East, refusing to sign new arms deals with Israel. At the time, Rabin asked Secretary of State Henry Kissinger; "I must know where we stand in our relations. From now on, whenever there is any disagreement between us because we believe that your position endangers Israel's security, do you intend to 'reassess'?." ("The Rabin Memoirs," page 262).

Talks With Lebanon To Resume in 'Next Few Days'

TA1312111695 Tel Aviv MA'ARIV in Hebrew 13 Dec 95 p 6

[Pool report]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Negotiations between Israel and Lebanon on the signing of a peace treaty are expected to resume within the next few days in conjunction with the reopening of talks with Syria. This was reported yesterday by political sources accompanying Prime Minister Shim'on Peres in Washington.

The same sources reported that when he visits Damascus, Secretary of State Warren Christopher is expected to reach an agreement with the Syrian leadership on the framework of the negotiations, including the resumption of the talks between Lebanon and Israel, after an 18-month hiatus.

The sources also revealed that in the past few days, Saudi Arabia sent an unequivocal message to the United States that Riyadh is prepared to establish full diplomatic relations with Israel as soon as Damascus and Jerusalem sign a peace treaty. [passage omitted]

Envoy Apologizes for Wounding of UN Troops

TA1312111195 Jerusalem THE JERUSALEM POST in English 13 Dec 95 p 2

[Report by David Rudge]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] IDF [Israel Defense Forces] and SLA [South Lebanese Army] gunners blasted suspected terrorist targets north of the security zone yesterday after an attack on an SLA position near Hunah village in the zone's eastern sector. Several mortar rounds were fired at the post, without causing any casualties or damage. Hizballah claimed responsibility for the attack.

Meanwhile, UN ambassador Gad Ya'aqobi yesterday met with the UN's assistant secretary-general for peacekeeping, Ikbal Reza, and was presented with an official protest over the wounding of three UNIFIL [UN Interim Force in Lebanon] soldiers by IDF tank fire on Sunday [10 December].

Reports from New York said Ya'aqobi had made it clear that the firing was an accident and that apologies had been passed to the UNIFIL command by all levels, including from Chief of General Staff Lt.-Gen. Amnon Lipkin-Shahaq.

UNIFIL spokesman Timur Goksel confirmed yesterday that Shahaq had called UNIFIL commander Maj.-Gen. Stanilas Wozniak to express regrets over the incident, and that he had promised a thorough investigation into all the circumstances.

The international peacekeeping force was asked to recover the bodies of the two Anlal gunmen killed in the clash last Wednesday in which an IDF soldier was killed and several others were wounded.

Goksel said UNIFIL had still not received permission from the IDF to enter the area and remove the bodies of the gunmen. He said he was told an answer was coming "tomorrow" and "since then six tomorrows have passed and we are still waiting."

General To Change Redeployment Procedures

TA1312121595 Tel Aviv HA'ARETZ in Hebrew 13 Dec 95 pp A1, A10

[Report by Eytan Rabin]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Major General Ilan Biran, chief of the Central Command, told HA'ARETZ that following the IDF [Israel Defense Forces] pullout from Nabulus amid rioting by thousands of Palestinians, he has decided to change the redeployment practices in cities to be handed over to the Palestinian Authority [PA] — Qalqilyah, Bethlehem, and Hebron.

"We decided to modify the procedures, and the evacuation of Qalqilyah will be done under different rules," Biran said, adding: "The objective is to carry out the pullout both during the day and at night. At the same time, we do not want to combine this sensitive matter of the IDF troops' pullout with the entry of the Palestinian Police and the jubilant crowds. If we leave less opportunity for friction, we will avoid events such as the one in Nabulus. I can state with certainty that had a single bullet been fired causing casualties, everything would have been completely different. You cannot expect a departing military force to be busy enforcing law and order."

Gen. Biran said that he has not discussed the issue with Palestinian officers as yet, but that he will today. The Central Command chief revealed that he has spoken on the phone with Abu-'Ala' [Ahmad Quray'], but he refused to divulge the topic of the conversation.

He said "there are two sides to this; it should be understood that more than one side is involved." He voiced satisfaction with the fact that, although thousands stormed the fences in Nabulus, the policemen and soldiers acted with restraint and refrained from firing. "It is a very complicated situation," he added.

Gen. Biran stressed that the IDF troops had been ordered to exit Nabulus without causing casualties. "If someone thought we could pull out of the West Bank cities amid showers of rice and candy — after the Nabulus jail had hosted the representative of every local clan — that person does not completely understand the Zionist-Palestinian conflict."

Referring to the accord violations by the Palestinian Police and the deployment of more policemen than agreed, Gen. Biran said: "There have been occurrences in Nabulus and other places — such as uniformed policemen deploying without consideration for the timetable and without prior coordination — that digress from the agreements. We informed the Palestinians that we will not tolerate it. I know the PA has taken steps to prevent it. This is one of the issues on the agenda of my talks with them today."

Internal Security Minister Moshe Shahal will bring up the issue of the Nabulus withdrawal at the next cabinet meeting.

The Central Command chief directed extremely harsh criticism at Eli Rosenfeld, the director of the Joseph's Tomb yeshiva, who contended two days ago that the general had promised that the settlers would not be removed. Biran said "it is the basest lie. I never promised not to close off the area, and the yeshiva director's claim is a mean lie." [passage omitted]

Labor Said Considering Early Elections Option

TA1312113395 Tel Aviv MA'ARIV in Hebrew 13 Dec 95 p 14

[Report by Yo'av Limor]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] In the last few days, Labor Party sources have examined the possibility of pushing forward the 1996 elections from 29 October to June or July.

In light of the "warming up" of the contacts with Syria, the Labor Party is considering pushing forward the elections in the event that an agreement is reached within the first few months of 1996.

Senior Labor Party sources said yesterday that Prime Minister Shim'on Peres intends to implement the late Yitzhaq Rabin's promise to hold a national referendum or call elections over an agreement with Syria. They said that if an agreement is reached within two or three months, a national referendum will be held and the elections will take place as scheduled. However, if the agreement comes late, the elections themselves would constitute a national referendum. In such a case, Labor Party officials are considering pushing forward the elections so as not to drag out the decision and the agreement's subsequent implementation over many months. [passage omitted]

At the same time, the Labor Party is maintaining "quiet contacts" with the religious parties. It seems, however, that the chances for creating a "safety net" for the government from outside the coalition have failed. Ministers acquainted with the negotiations with the ultra-Orthodox parties said that it will be difficult to reach agreement with the religious, who have set many preconditions for supporting the coalition from the outside. According to one of the ministers, "the issue of reform Judaism is just the beginning for them; they will then go on to demand many things we cannot concede."

Qahalani 'Unanimously' Named Third Way Chairman

TA1312105595 Jerusalem THE JERUSALEM POST in English 13 Dec 95 p 1

[Report by Sarah Honig]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The Third Way Council yesterday unanimously elected Labor MK [Knesset Member] Avigdor Qahalani as its chairman, while former chief of general staff Dan Shomron announced he is ceasing all activity within the movement, though he will not opt for another political framework.

The Third Way Council, which met in Kibbutz Shefayim last night, also unanimously empowered the two Labor MKs who lead it - Qahalani and 'Imanu'el Zissman - to vote no confidence in the government if Prime Minister Shim'on Peres announces readiness to cede the Golan Heights to Syria.

The council session was the culmination of months of tension between Qahalani and Shomron, in which Shomron made what he deemed would be his final appearance before the forum. "I believe in a fair fight and I believe in elections, but in this case I am not sure Avigdor is being elected or appointed. We have a case of elections which were held without prior announcement and with only a single candidate...

"Because I cannot abide by such rules of the game, I am hereby announcing that I am withdrawing from all involvement in Third Way affairs, though I remain true and committed to the Third Way's path. I am not withdrawing in order to join any other group or party, as has been intimated in the press," Shomron said.

Another speaker, Golan Heights Residents Committee chairman Eli Malka, reproached the Third Way for "what it has been occupying itself with in recent weeks. While the government is preparing to hand over the Golan, what has the Third Way been spending its energies on? Was it the Golan? No. It was who will head the movement's secretariat.?"

Labor Party sources told The Jerusalem Post last night that they have not given up on Shomron's joining Labor despite his statement yesterday.

Conversion Issue Seen Menacing Government

TA0812150095 Jerusalem THE JERUSALEM POST in English 8 Dec p 8

[Commentary by Liat Collins: "A New Catch-22: Shim'on Peres and the 'Jewish' Vote"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] It is no surprise to hear the word "reform" being repeated in the corridors of power when a new government is being created, but only in Israel could the buzzword refer to a religious stream rather than some wide reaching economic, social or political plan.

Over the last few weeks, the political factions have had a series of meetings, separately and together, to work out and present their demands to Prime Minister Shim'on Peres regarding the High Court of Justice's ruling last month.

The ruling determined that Reform and Conservative conversions in Israel are not dependent on the approval of the Chief Rabbinate.

Although the High Court accepted the principle that non-Orthodox conversions in Israel are legitimate, it did not define what status the converts are granted.

It placed the onus on the Knesset to decide whether the converts should be recognized for registration needs such as identity cards.

The result is a Catch-22 situation for Peres, who has to work out whom he can least afford to offend. While Meretz has demanded that no new coalition legislate against the High Court decision, the religious parties are equally determined that canceling the court's ruling should be a precondition for joining the government or supporting it.

To complicate matters further, Justice Minister David Liba'i (Labor) appears to favor legislation that would go against the court's ruling, while Meretz MK [Knesset Member] Dedi Zucker, who chairs the Knesset Law Committee that would have to discuss the new law, vehemently opposes it.

Theoretically, Peres could simply throw the matter back at the court; but many legislators, who feel the judges are trying to whittle away the Knesset's power, would not agree to a move which would add to the court's prestige.

On the other hand, the judiciary might overrule any legislation which canceled the recognition of the Reform conversions on the grounds that it violates the Basic Laws. There are also external ramifications to be considered. If Peres agrees to the demands of the religious parties, he would probably alienate a large sector of U.S. Jewry, which wholeheartedly accepts the Reform and Conservative movements.

However, Peres would probably be willing to risk a frontal clash with U.S. Jewry if it allows him to realize his dream of a new Middle East by bringing the Orthodox into the coalition or getting their support from outside.

For Labor, the timing of the High Court decision was extremely unfortunate: just two days before the start of the coalition talks, and a week after Yitzhaq Rabin's assassination created an anti-religious backlash.

The decision affected the status quo over religion at its most sensitive point, the issue of "Who is a Jew?"

It was immediately clear that no religious party could afford to join the government without a promise that the Knesset would pass legislation that would attempt to return the situation to its previous state.

The question was most relevant for the National Religious Party [NRP] and SHAS [Torah Observing Sephardim]. United Torah Jewry had already stated that it would at best only support the government from outside the coalition, but the NRP was particularly motivated to renew ties with Labor after Peres brought the moderate Memad movement's Rabbi Yehuda 'Amital into the cabinet.

The NRP has to make a move to prevent its centrist voters from following 'Amital.

SHAS, however, repeated several times that it would not be the only religious party to join the coalition. Former interior minister Yitzhaq Peretz (SHAS) resigned in 1988 when the High Court determined that Reform conversion abroad entitled the convert to be a new immigrant and citizen. He left rather than sign the identity card of Reform convert Shoshana Miller. (Since then there has been a distinction between Reform conversions performed abroad and those performed here.)

A strong SHAS minority group had always favored returning to the government, and party leader Arye Der'i had constantly fought to keep the party in the opposition — often against the natural tendency of spiritual leader Rabbi 'Ovadya Yosef.

The unaffiliated, haredi [ultra-Orthodox] YOM HASHISHI weekly noted that Der'i was often forced to find new and better excuses for staying out of the coalition, such as the security of settlers and the law forbidding the import of nonkosher meat.

Finally, running out of excuses, he began declaring that, with just a year until the elections, SHAS could not afford to sit in this type of government and should try to draw closer to the other haredi parties which also opposed it.

This claim worked until Rabin was assassinated and previously firm opponents, such as the NRP and the Agudat Yisra'el stream within United Torah Jewry, began talking about providing Peres with a "safety net" and support from outside.

Der'i had to find a new excuse to explain to Yosef why SHAS should stay out.

The Reform conversions provided the perfect pretext.

Here was perhaps the greatest threat yet to the status quo, and, as the religious parties perceived it, the greatest threat to Israel's existence as a Jewish state.

No religious party could consider joining the coalition without first being assured that the conversions were unacceptable.

"The amendment on the issue can be made only via clear-cut legislation and no other solution is acceptable," MK Rabbi Yitzhaq Levi (NRP) said.

"If no solution is found to halt the registration of Reform conversions, there will be no political rapprochement since this subject has far-reaching implications on the future of the Jewish people."

A supporter of the status quo and disciple of its creator, Peres would probably have no problem with such legislation if it were not for the Meretz threat to immediately leave the coalition. Although the religious MK's would more than amply fill the seats vacated by

Meretz, Peres — with just one year in which to prove himself before the elections — is hesitant about taking a step that would require a major upheaval.

"There is no doubt that Meretz would take action to thwart legislation against the Reform conversions if it comes down to it," Absorption Minister Ya'ir Tzaban said last week. "Jewish history is full of different (religious) streams which grew up side by side and occasionally one against the other.

"In a democratic country and an enlightened society it is only proper that these streams will be given the right of recognition to realize themselves equally and fairly." This week he told the Knesset plenum that if it were not for the Reform Movement, a large part of U.S. Jewry would have assimilated. "The days of the Orthodox monopoly are over," he said, responding to motions to the agenda on his presence at the Reform wedding in the U.S. of an Israeli couple who cannot marry here for halakic reasons.

Peres knows that Meretz would not vote against the peace process; so therefore, theoretically, he could be better off with religious coalition partners as he would keep the Meretz faction votes in the plenum anyway. But he also realizes that if the peace train is to gather enough speed to meet its destination by polling day, he needs Meretz sitting with him in the front carriage especially on the most difficult track.

He cannot rely on religious MK's to stay on the train at stops along the way if the going gets rough — if, for example, he needs to evacuate Golan Heights settlements.

Presenting the country — and the world — with a picture of continuity and calm despite the shock of the assassination, is essential for Peres. This more than any other factor is probably the reason why he chose Minister Yosi Beilin to do the dirty work instead of him, running from religious faction to religious faction with an outstretched arm before the government was sworn in.

The effect was a casus belli for the War of the Yosis — Meretz's Yosi Sarid versus Labor's Yosi Beilin.

Beilin won the battle but lost the war. Just before Peres had to submit to the Knesset and president the list of his cabinet candidates, Sarid discovered the written agreement the NRP was to sign with Peres. It included a clause protecting the religious status quo.

Sarid raced into Peres's office and gave his final ultimatum: them or us. With no NRP signature on the document of understanding and just 60 minutes left before he had to present his list, Peres was forced to give in.

But the contact with the religious parties has not been cut off. Under the new system of direct elections for the premiership, Peres needs peace both at home and beyond the borders in order to keep his seat. He must be sure religious voters will choose him rather than Binyamin Netanyahu.

That is why his first speeches have been particularly conciliatory towards the religious public. Peres hopes that in November 1996 religious voters will help bring him back to power in his own right. It could be said that Peres is looking for the "Jewish" vote.

NEQUDA Press Review for Nov

TA0712160995

[FBIS Editorial Report] The following is a review of the November issue of NEQUDA, the Hebrew-language monthly magazine published by the Society for the Advancement of Settlement and Absorption in Judaea, Samaria, the Gaza Strip, and the Jordan Valley, which serves as the political organ of the Jewish settlers in the territories. These reports include summaries of all articles, reports, interviews, and commentaries with a bearing on political affairs published in NEQUDA.

This editorial report reviews the NEQUDA November 1995 issue, which is the first to appear in a new format under the editorship of Uri Elitzur. Elitzur replaced Yehuda Har'el, who retired after 16 years as the magazine's editor in chief. The magazine now contains several pages of news items, while the column "In Lieu of an Editorial" has been replaced by the columns "Opening Page," signed by Uri Elitzur, and "Closing Page," signed by Hagay Segal.

Published after the assassination of Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin, the magazine includes obituaries by: The Council of Jewish Settlements in Judaea, Samaria, and Gaza and NEQUDA; the National Religious Party; and the Likud movement and faction in the Knesset.

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1. Opening Page
2. News Section
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5. And You Shall Do What Is Right and Good

OPENING PAGE

This 300-word column appearing on page 3 and signed by editor in chief Uri Elitzur is entitled "Dealing With the Feeling of Despair and Helplessness" and deals with the lessons that must be learned from the assassination of Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin. Elitzur writes: "If we want to prevent the next assassination by the right, which this time will trigger a counterassassination by the left, the feeling of despair and helplessness must be addressed. The decision must be made on a broader basis, the democratic decision must also look good and not hinge on a tiny majority, and, if there is no overwhelming majority, there is nothing to do but to ask the people not to trample it. That is what my coolheaded brain tells me, but I am not sure that anybody is in the right state of mind now to listen to the brain."

FROM THE NEWS SECTION:

1. Shin Bet approached settlement council leaders in bid to locate potential assassins
2. Oslo C map detailed
3. Secret negotiations held in Gaza on permanent arrangement
4. PLO exiles met Shin Bet officials in Morocco
5. Foreign Minister Peres agreed to international arbitration about control of electricity grid, p 14, 150
6. 'Arafat allegedly financed political activity in Israel via Ahmad al-Tibi, p 14, 200
7. 'Arafat visited Malta two weeks before al-Shaqaqi's assassination to meet with Hamas leaders from Sudan, p 15, 200
8. 'Arafat angry with Faysal al-Husayni because Saudis want to transfer aid directly to latter, p 15, 200
9. Betzedeq human rights organization claims Jews employing Arabs in territories will have to pay taxes to PLO, p 16, 150
10. Loophole in Oslo accords could enable PLO to smuggle heavy weaponry through Israeli ports, p 17, 400
11. General 'Uzi Dayan admits Taba accords do not differentiate Areas A and B, p 17, 300

DAMNED BE THE ASSASSINS

This 600-word article on page 11 by Yo'el Ben-Nun says that the assassination of Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin "was an attempt to assassinate the independence of the Israeli people and the sovereign, Jewish, and democratic State of Israel." Moreover, "at this point, the assassination dealt a lethal blow to the legitimate public struggle for Eretz Yisra'el, a struggle that had good chances to succeed. There can be no public struggle coupled with a political assassination!" Ben-Nun goes on to say that as a result of the assassination, "the question of Eretz Yisra'el has now lost its place at the top of our public agenda. Henceforth, the question on the agenda will be whether we have an independent and sovereign state, whether we have an elected government or, God forbid, Jewish Hizballah-like revolutionary tribunals" which issue rulings condoning heinous political murders. "Our position on this issue must be unequivocal: No such thing will happen in Israel! We are for an independent and sovereign state and against 'a Jewish Hizballah,' because this would spell the destruction of the people, the ruin of the land, and, what is no less important, the devastation of the Torah." He notes that all this does not in the least detract from the government's share in the incitement against and the deligitimization of the adversary, and ends his article with a note about his personal contacts with the late Yitzhaq Rabin.

SLIGHTING THE MAINSTREAM

This 1,000-word article on pages 22 and 23 by Hayim Navon, a resident of Elqana and a student at the Har 'Etzyon Yeshiva in Alon Shvut, says that the national religious community has become a manic-depressive and, consequently, has been judging political events by two yardsticks: salvation or ruin. Navon calls for dropping this apocalyptic view and adopting "the normal option," which calls for "a realistic and candid perception of reality." Navon ends his article by saying: "We will go on fighting the political process" and "will fight the cultural platform of Meretz members in academia and the media with gritted teeth and relentlessly, even if they are not hybrids of 'riffraff' and the Hellenizers but post-modernist hedonists who emulate their counterparts in the Western world. We must fight all these, as our ancestors did for many years and as long as necessary, until the arrival of the messiah."

AND YOU SHALL DO WHAT IS RIGHT AND GOOD

This 1,000-word article on pages 34 and 35 was written by Yehuda Hankin, a former regional rabbi in the Bet She'an Valley and the current editor of a rabbinical journal. Hankin gives a scholarly explanation, based on the Scriptures, of the rabbinical ruling condoning the refusal of soldiers to obey orders to evacuate parts of Eretz Yisra'el. Noting that he does not agree with it, he then proceeds to take issue with Rabbi Yo'el Ben-Nun's position on the matter. He concludes his article by saying: "Orders that push many to the brink of refusing to obey orders, despite the punishment involved and even if, in the end, they do not cross the threshold, are no less a recipe for the disintegration of the army than the refusal itself. Indeed, if there ever is a policy that causes the secular public to experience spiritual turmoil similar in strength and dimension to what the evacuation of settlements evokes in us, then that same policy will prove to be divisive and perilous to the people and will have to be revoked."

Meeting of Iraqi Opposition Follows Saddam's Obstinancy

JN1312103195 Amman JORDAN TIMES in English 13 Dec 95 pp 1, 7

[Report by Natasha Bukhari; "Special to the JORDAN TIMES"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Amman—Jordan's offer to host a gathering of Iraqi opposition leaders to discuss a formula for political change in Iraq came after the failure of repeated attempts by His Majesty King Husayn to convince Iraqi President Saddam Husayn to take concrete steps towards lifting the crippling sanctions against Baghdad, a senior government official said Tuesday [12 December].

The last of these attempts was a letter from the King to President Saddam following the 8 August defection to Jordan of Iraqi military weapons' expert and President Saddam's son-in-law, General Husayn Kamil, to which Jordan got a negative response, according to the official, who requested anonymity.

In the letter, whose contents have hitherto not been revealed, "the King strongly advised the Iraqi president to take concrete measures towards meeting the conditions of the U.N. Security Council and lifting the crippling sanctions," the official said.

"His Majesty recommended that Baghdad open a new dialogue with the West based on Iraqi acceptance of U.N. resolutions and (Baghdad) assuming a role in the search for peace and stability throughout the Middle East," the official told the JORDAN TIMES in an interview.

He said that President Saddam's refusal to accept the advice, or even to accept U.N. Resolution 986, which allows Iraq partial oil sales to meet humanitarian needs which is seen as the only way for an initial alleviating for the suffering of Iraqis, and the Iraqi leader's disinclination to join the region's peace march prompted King Husayn to call for political change in Iraq.

According to the official, the letter to President Saddam was delivered by Royal Court Chief Marwan al-Qasim, who travelled to Baghdad shortly after the 8 August defection to Jordan of Gen. Kamil.

That trip by Mr. al-Qasim apparently was his second in three months as he had travelled to Baghdad with a similar message to President Saddam in late June, just before the King paid a visit to France to meet with the new President Jacques Chirac.

The Jordanian initiative to provide the Iraqi opposition with a forum to open a dialogue among themselves and agree on a formula for change in Iraq has been prompted not only by President Saddam's refusal to do whatever necessary to end his people's suffering but also by Jordan's concern to prevent any bloodshed that may result from the already existing disunity among rival factions in Iraq (Sunnis, Shi'ites and Kurds), the official explained. "Jordan's offer stems from the belief that a stable post-Saddam era can only be attained by untangling the divide among the Shi'ite Muslim majority in the south, the Kurds in the north, and the Sunni Muslim minority, which is Saddam's power base."

King Husayn met with different Iraqi opposition leaders in London last month and presented his views concerning the situation in Iraq and offered to host a gathering to discuss arrangements for changing the current status quo in Iraq which "is harmful to Iraqis and to us," said the official.

While Jordan holds on to its initiative of a dialogue among the three Iraqi groups, it was too early to discuss a timetable for any possible gathering since "the concept, shape, and context of such a meeting have not yet crystalised," the official said. Nevertheless, he stressed that King Husayn's initiative was met with enthusiasm and acceptance among some "legitimate leading Iraqi opposition figures."

Jordan's concern for Iraq's unity in case of any eventuality of change in its regime and its "political conduct towards Iraq" is part of Jordan's policy "to anticipate events to avoid remaining hostages to reactions," according to the official.

He said that on top of Jordan's refusal to sit idle while people in neighbouring and brotherly country are paying the price for their government's mistakes, Amman would also like to protect its interests both internally and regionally.

The trade sanctions against Baghdad have harmed Jordan's economy gravely, and in more ways than one: They had halted free trade with Iraq, once Jordan's largest trade partner, and overloaded Jordan with additional financial burdens resulting from the exodus of about 33,000 Iraqis who arrived in the Kingdom during the Gulf war as well as about 350,000 Palestinians who were kicked out from Gulf States which were angered by Jordan's stance during the crisis.

While Jordan still imports all its oil from Iraq under a special U.N. deal allowing the Kingdom to export $450 million worth of goods, mainly food and medicine, in return for its oil supply, Jordan has lost about $400 million in exports to Baghdad.

On a regional level, the official said that Jordan' initiative will only be successful if backed by regional parties.

Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and Syria have expressed scepticism at "the unification of the Iraq opposition" under the leadership of Gen. Kamil, widely seen as a former backbone of the Iraqi regime during its most aggressive tactics against Kuwait.

But the official affirmed that Jordan's proposal does not entail the nomination of Gen. Kamil as the head of any such unified organisation to be entrusted with overseeing a "peaceful transformation" in Iraq.

He also rejected suggestions by some Egyptian officials that the Jordanian leadership was aiming to restore the Hashemite monarchy to Iraq, ruled by King Husayn's cousin King Faysal II until his death in a 1985 coup, and he dismissed accusations by Syria that Jordan was seeking to divide Iraq along the lines of ethnic groups.

While Jordan's priority is to ensure Iraq's national unity, other countries are unfortunately "more concerned with regional interests."

Iraq To Supply 3.1 Million Tonnes of Oil

MM1212110295 London AL-HAYAH in Arabic 11 Dec 95 p 4

[Unattributed report: "Amman: Agreement To Meet Jordan's Needs for Iraqi Oil"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Amman, AL-HAYAH — Jordanian Energy and Mineral Resources Minister Samih Darwazah has said that "Iraq will supply Jordan with 3.1 million tonnes of crude oil, in addition to other oil byproducts, heavy oil, and gas by means of Jordanian oil tankers."

He added in a statement to AL-HAYAH that this quantity "will cover the Kingdom's oil needs in 1996." He pointed out that this quantity will be transported by 2,000 tankers. As is known, Jordan imports some 70,000 barrels of Iraqi oil a day. The oil is refined in the Jordanian refinery. He said that the quantities to be imported by the Kingdom will be "allocated to the Jordanian market." He pointed out that the increase in the population and in local consumption is behind the decision to increase the imported quantity by 5 percent compared with the quantity imported this year.

It is worth mentioning that Jordanian-Iraqi oil cooperation has not been affected by the defection to Jordan on 8 August of the Iraqi president's sons-in-law, General Husayn Kamil and his brother Colonel Saddam Kamil. Jordan imports oil from Iraq under special permission from the UN sanctions committee and against debts owed to Jordan by Iraq totaling $1.1 billion.

Darwazah said that Jordan "will supply the Iraqi side with Jordanian products and services in return for part of this quantity of oil." He said that talks will be held at the end of the month between the Jordanian and Iraqi sides to implement the clauses of the oil agreement, which is renewed annually.

Israeli Embassy in Amman To Issue Visas

JN1112153195 Amman AL-ASWAQ in Arabic 11 Dec 95 pp 1, 19

[Report by 'Isam al-Majali]

[FBIS Translated Text] Jordanian Foreign Ministry sources have said that Jordanian citizens who want to travel to Israel can obtain an entry visa directly from the Israeli Embassy in Amman rather than from tourist bureaus.

Samir al-Humud, head of the Foreign Ministry's Consular Section, said that in a memorandum, the Israeli Embassy in Amman asked that visas be obtained directly from the embassy.

It was learned that this decision aims at controlling the process of obtaining visas through tourist bureaus and travel agents.

Jordanian-Israeli talks were recently held to grant visas to the citizens of both countries through their embassies in Amman and Tel Aviv. The Jordanian Embassy in Tel Aviv began to grant visas to Israelis who want to visit Jordan. This is to facilitate movement between the two countries.

Al-Humud said that the Israeli decision is a result of agreements that deal with the exchange of tourists and visitors.

Saudi Envoy on King's Visit, Bilateral Ties

JN1212102995 Amman Jordan Television Network in Arabic 1800 GMT 11 Dec 95

[Announcer-read report over video]

[FBIS Translated Text] Saudi Ambassador to Jordan 'Abdallah al-Sudayri welcomed the expected visit His Majesty King Husayn will pay to Saudi Arabia. In an exclusive interview with our correspondent for political affairs, he said that normalizing Jordanian-Saudi relations will serve inter-Arab relations and both fraternal peoples.

[Begin recording] [Correspondent Salim 'Ali Dhiyab] To begin with, the brothers must be reassured about the health of His Majesty King Fahd Al Sa'ud.

[Al-Sudayri] God be praised, the health of the custodian of the two holy mosques, King Fahd, is good. As you know, he left the hospital and is now in good health, praise be to God.

[Dhiyab] His Majesty King Husayn was expected to meet with his brother His Majesty King Fahd. What is new about this visit?

[Al-Sudayri] We are all looking forward to this visit. It will take place in the near future, God willing. As you heard, King Fahd needs a few days to rest. This visit will be paid as soon as possible, God willing.

[Dhiyab] Mr. 'Abdallah al-Sudayri: Regarding Jordanian-Saudi relations, which are a substantive matter, how do you assess the level of these relations now?

[Al-Sudayri] I believe that these relations are now as they should be. They are good and excellent relations and are developing. They are also old relations, and they will reach the same level as before, God willing.

[Dhiyab] This is the political aspect of these relations. We are asking for details in terms of the economic, manpower, and other aspects.

[Al-Sudayri] I believe that all aspects of bilateral relations will return to normal, God willing. All of us in both countries hope that bilateral relations will be as strong as they were in the past, God willing.

[Dhiyab] In your opinion, how can Jordanian-Saudi relations—through their special character and development—serve inter-Arab relations in general?

[Al-Sudayri] Relations between any two Arab countries will ultimately serve all Arab states and peoples. Hence, any development and improvement in relations between any two Arab countries will actually be a gain for all Arab states.

[Dhiyab] Thank you.

[Al-Sudayri] Thank you very much. I would like to thank Jordanian Television for giving me this opportunity. I send my greetings to His Majesty King Husayn, his highness the crown prince, and the friendly Jordanian people. God willing, things will improve. We hope for further improvement, God willing.

[Dhiyab] Thank you, Mr. 'Abdallah al-Sudayri, Saudi ambassador in Amman.

[Al-Sudayri] Thank you very much. [end recording]

Paper Criticizes 'Skeptics,' 'Inflation' of Issues

JN1212125395 Amman AL-ASWAQ in Arabic 12 Dec 95 p 17

[Editorial: "The Objectives of Inflating Imaginary Issues"]

[FBIS Translated Text] The issue of pinpointing the identity of the Jordanian political trend now and in the future is no longer questioned by the majority of people who are living with the facts as they are and reading the words and deeds through their direct, clear, and specific meanings that cannot be confused or misinterpreted.

This is so because democracy, pluralism, and responsible freedom which adheres to the constitution, the laws, and the clear institutional channels in order to participate in decisionmaking cannot be denied by skeptics who are living inside Jordan, nor can they be undermined or distorted by skeptics who lack the minimum of democracy, pluralism, and responsible freedom in the surrounding countries.

Amid this inflation of issues—most of which are imaginary ones— His Excellency Prime Minister al-Sharif Zayd Bin-Shakir, during his meeting with a group of journalists two days ago, expressed astonishment at the issues being raised. This astonishment is part of the legitimate questions about the purposes and objectives which first harm democracy and freedom. Those who foment sedition and do harm on all levels of interest to Jordan and Jordanians are actually shedding crocodile tears over democracy and freedom.

Furthermore, those who praise the good characters they see in some brothers and who harm others at the same time make public statements which are replete with contradictions. At a time when they weep over the freedom of speech and media, which they say is "threatened" in Jordan, they desperately defend some people who do not respect the minimum level of human rights. The political dictionary of the latter people does not have any room for such things as democracy, freedom of the press, and freedom of expressing a controversial viewpoint in any way whatsoever.

Moreover, those who assail Jordan's success in regaining its just national rights through the peace treaty signed with Israel as well as Jordan's adherence to the Palestinian and pan-Arab rights as part of the negotiating process, which was agreed by all parties, do not accuse others who held secret negotiations a few years ago and who still hold secret negotiations to regain their pure national objectives from the peace process.

Likewise, those who showed, and continue to show, their fear for Jordan's Arab role and pan-Arab dimension—whenever there is talk about regional cooperation during the restructuring of relations in the region—are the same people who circumvent the red lines and attack this or that country whenever a glimpse of hope looms in the horizon for regaining and entrenching relations with the Arab brothers which were much affected by the Gulf war. They aim to undermine these relations and obstruct their advance toward the sought objective in terms of a new Arab system for cooperation and coordination on all levels.

Without much scrutiny of what is being raised on the local sensational scene through the abundance of democracy, it is clear even to the ordinary people who do not follow up events that some of those who loudly say that they have fears for the homeland, democracy, freedom, and pan-Arabism are the same ones who are doing their best, either through determination or as a result of making fatal mistakes in personal interpretations, to harm Jordan and undermine its impregnability and its chance for development and construction. They are the same ones who seek to isolate Jordan from its pan-Arab role and discard its ability to continue its pioneering role for which Jordan has offered many sacrifices.

The identity of the democratic, pan-Arab Jordanian political trend, which seeks a comprehensive cooperation for development and construction, is clear to everyone, except those who wish to wrongly read and understand things for purposes that have nothing to do with achieving a better future for Jordan and Jordanians.

Fadlallah on U.S. Support for Israel

NC1312100295 Ba'labakk Voice of the Oppressed in Arabic 0630 GMT 13 Dec 95

[Report by Ahmad Abu-'Ali in Beirut]

[FBIS Translated Text] Ayatollah al-Sayyid Muhammad Husayn Fadlallah has said that the Zionist society is experiencing a deep, major crisis following the assassination of Yitzhaq Rabin. In his Koranic interpretation lesson, his eminence said that the United States is enthusiastic about a settlement in the region to use this in the local U.S. elections. He noted the U.S. promise to maintain Israel's qualitative military superiority in the region. He said Syria is not ready to pay any price, and he suggested that U.S. President Bill Clinton has become the official spokesman of the Zionist entity. He added: According to Arab and international facts, we find no major developments on the horizon. But we register our reservations about this because we do not rule out behind-the-scene events.

His eminence said: [Begin Fadlallah recording] Now, the president of the United States is not applying, or does not want to apply, pressure on Israel. We noticed that in his statements while receiving the enemy Prime Minister [Shim'on Peres], he said he will [word indistinct] peace for him. He said he will work to maintain Israel's qualitative superiority so that Israel will remain the strongest military and economic power in the region. He told him that he is absolutely committed to Israel's security and will perhaps conclude a joint defense pact with Israel. He told them [the Israelis] that they will not take risks as far as peace is concerned. So we hear Clinton offering the enemy everything and the Arabs, particularly Syria, nothing. It is Ironic that Clinton is now speaking for Israel, announcing that President al-Asad is preparing for peace, and so on. He has become the official spokesman for Israel, not leaving the enemy prime minister make such announcements.

Based on the available facts on both the Arab and Israeli scenes, we do not see a major change on the horizon. But as we repeatedly said, we do not know if there are developments taking place behind the scenes. We, therefore, record our reservations about this. [end recording]

Asked about [words indistinct] Jordan, his eminence said that this represents an aggression on freedom and democracy and [words indistinct] normalization with the enemy [words indistinct].

He labeled the Jordanian and Egyptian regimes as despotic [words indistinct] that the Egyptian elections [words indistinct]. He said these regimes are being ruled by the intelligence services, and any regime ruled by intelligence cannot [word indistinct] the people that reject injustice and will certainly rebel against the situation.

Al-Hirawi Cited on 'Resistance,' Negotiations

NC1312123995 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 1130 GMT 13 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] President Ilyas al-Hirawi has reiterated that resistance will continue until the Israelis leave Lebanon or set a specific program for a comprehensive withdrawal. He told a delegation from the Arab News Agencies Union that what happened in Oslo and later in Jordan did not support the Arab countries and the Arab negotiators, but was one of the causes of [Arab] weakness in the negotiations. President al-Hirawi hoped that Warren Christopher is visiting the region not for consultations and shuttle visits, but for practical results. [passage omitted]

Buwayz Reiterates Position on Peace With Israel

NC1312065795 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 0530 GMT 13 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Lebanon has reiterated its position on the peace process, stressing its rejection of any partial deals and calling for a just and comprehensive peace and for Israel's implementation of Security Council Resolution 425. Speaking to the parliament's Foreign Affairs Committee, Foreign Minister Faris Buwayz noted many signs of progress regarding the peace process, but said the Israeli officials are very cautious of how such a thing may affect them. The committee discussed the results of the Barcelona conference and negotiations to join GATT. Minister Buwayz said that despite all moves and visits, there is nothing concrete to suggest that the peace process will see tangible progress. Things will become clearer after U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher's visit to Damascus, he said.

Interior Minister on Increase of Israeli 'Agents'

NC1312083195 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 0530 GMT 13 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Michel al-Murr, deputy prime minister and interior minister, chaired a meeting for the Internal Security Council. All members attended. The conferees discussed all security aspects and stressed the need to maintain security, especially during the holiday season, to prevent any attempts to create confusion. Noting that Israel's agents on Lebanese territories have recently increased, Minister al-Murr said that the security services have detained a number of people for interrogation. He said:

[Begin al-Murr recording] Some issued statements on intentions to stage demonstrations, close schools, or do certain things by force. We at the Central Security Council have decided to remind everyone that demonstrations of any kind and for any reason are banned. No one can replace the state and the authorities in applying the law. When the state wants to close schools, it makes the decision and specifies the dates. It is not demonstrations that close schools. [end recording]

Israelis Hand Over Bodies of Two Amal Fighters

NC1312124895 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 1130 GMT 13 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] The Israeli occupation forces today handed over the bodies of two Amal Resistance fighters killed in the south last week. They are Muhammad Hutayt and Ahmad Qubaysi. Timor Goksel, spokesman for the UN Interim Force in Lebanon, announced that the agreement was reached after a week of contacts with the Israeli forces. The two bodies were removed today.

State Ready To Send Troops to South After Pullout

NC1212203395 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 1630 GMT 12 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Lebanese Ambassador in Cairo Hisham Dimashqiyah has affirmed that Lebanon is prepared to deploy 25,000 Lebanese soldiers in the south once the Israeli troops withdraw from the occupied Lebanese territories.

Following a meeting with Arab League Secretary General Dr. 'Ismat 'Abd-al-Majid, the Lebanese ambassador underlined that the Lebanese resistance will continue as long as the occupation exists. He affirmed that the Lebanese Government is prepared to end resistance action once the occupation ends.

Dimashqiyah pointed out that Lebanon refuses to accept the establishment of early warning stations in the south. He said, however, that Lebanon is willing to sign a peace agreement with Israel in coordination with Syria.

The Lebanese ambassador delivered a message to 'Abd-al-Majid from Foreign Minister Faris Buwayz voicing support for his reelection as Arab League secretary general.

Tension Continues in South With Shelling, Attacks

NC1312074495 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 0530 GMT 13 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Tension and caution prevail in the liberated areas adjacent to the occupied border strip amid Israeli aggressions that continued overnight, with shells landing in some villages, especially in Iqlim al-Tuffah. Earlier, the occupation forces shelled the towns of Bra'shit, Haris, Sribbin, and Wadi al-Saluqi.

The media office of Amal Movement in the south reported that for the seventh successive day, the Zionist occupation forces refuse to hand over the bodies of Amal martyrs Ahmad Qays and Muhammad Hutayt. The office called on international organizations to pressure Israel into allowing the bodies of the two martyrs to be withdrawn from the battlefield.

[In a related report, Ba'labakk Voice of the Oppressed in Arabic at 0630 GMT on 13 December adds: "While a joint Israeli-Lahdist engineering unit was laying mines and erecting barbed wire in fields around Bayt Yahun at 1310 yesterday, the Islamic Resistance' Fire Support Unit targeted it using the appropriate weapons, and prevented it from realizing its objectives." The report adds: "At 1110 yesterday, Martyr Muhammad 'Atiyah group of the Islamic Resistance detonated an explosive charge as a Lahdist patrol was passing along the road to Saydun post. Members of the patrol were killed or wounded, and an armored personnel carrier was damaged. At 0930 yesterday, the Islamic Resistance spotted a joint Zionist-Lahdist unit in Kafr Huna position. The Fire Support Unit shot directly at the unit."]

Radio Reports Hizballah Attack, No Casualties

NC1312084695 Kafr Killa Voice of the South in Arabic 0800 GMT 13 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] The South Lebanese Army's [SLA] post in Kafr Huna came under artillery shelling from terrorist hideouts in Western al-Biqa'. There were no casualties. Israeli and SLA artillery returned the fire.

Radio: al-Asad-Clinton Contact 'Revitalized' Hopes

JN1212150295 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1233 GMT 12 Dec 95

[Station commentary]

[FBIS Translated Text] Gentlemen: Following yesterday's telephone call between Presidents al-Asad and Clinton in which the Syrian and American parties stressed their commitment to advancing the peace process in the region in light of the ideas the Israeli prime minister has carried to Washington, hopes were revitalized that it is possible to realize fresh progress in peace efforts. The U.S. secretary of state is expected to arrive in the region on 15 December to arrange for a resumption of talks between Syria and Israel under the auspices and with the participation of the United States.

It has become common knowledge that peace between Syria and Israel is the key to comprehensive peace in the Middle East. This fact was asserted by the Americans on many occasions. It was also underscored by the Europeans and all the international parties interested in extricating the region from the whirlwind of wars and conflicts. Israeli Prime Minister Shim'on Peres said that peace with Syria and Lebanon is an essential issue. He pledged to make every possible effort to resolve differences with Syria.

It is well known that Syria is committed to the Security Council resolutions which regulate the peace process; namely, Resolutions 242, 338, and 425. These resolutions are clear and forthright. They do not sanction occupying the lands of others or tampering with their character and history. They call on Israel to effect complete withdrawal and return to the previous lines, that is, 4 June 1967 lines as far as Syria is concerned and to the pre-1978 invasion as far as Lebanon is concerned.

Israel's commitment to the implementation of these resolutions will open wide the doors of peace. It will also put an end to a long, bleak epoch in the history of the region — an epoch that was tainted with violence, blood, suffering, and ordeals. Time is running out significantly, given Israel's four years of squandering time since the Madrid conference by implementing policies that were marked with intransigence and procrastination. Therefore, there is no alternative to a serious and sincere endeavor to address all the basic issues, foremost of which is full withdrawal and working out equitable and even [mutakafi'ah wa muta'adilah] security arrangements. This requires a swift Israeli action and abandoning of the impossible conditions the ex-Israeli government had stipulated, thus retarding the Syrian and Lebanese tracks.

Syria asserted on more than one occasion, as it did yesterday through President Hafiz al-Asad, that it is committed to the peace process and its foundations and that it seriously seeks to ensure its success. On the other hand, Syria expects Israel will respond to the objective bases of peace, fully withdraw form the Golan, and embrace the principle of security equitability regarding the arrangements that will succeed this withdrawal.

If the Israeli response is the key to any progress on the Syrian and Lebanese tracks, then the United States can accelerate the peace process, given that it is the sponsor, has international clout, and has pledged to play the role of a full, honest, and fair partner. Syria demands nothing beyond its land and the implementation of Security Council resolutions and the land-for-peace principle.

Official: Peres Should Discuss Details of Peace

NC1312065495 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 0530 GMT 13 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Through a senior official, Syria has said that Israeli Prime Minister Shim'on Peres should talk about details and that his statements should not be confined to generalities. He said Peres has to announce that peace with Syria cannot be achieved without full withdrawal from the Golan Heights. The Syrian official said it is not possible to talk about breakthroughs in the peace negotiations before U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher's visit to the region Thursday. He said this depends on the ideas the U.S. secretary will bring and whether they are new and can remove the obstacles that have so far obstructed progress in the peace process.

Paper Urges Peres To Couple Words With Deeds

JN1212160295 Damascus SANA in Arabic 0820 GMT 12 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Damascus, 12 Dec (SANA) — [passage omitted] The newspaper AL-THAWRAH says that Shim'on Peres' recent statements in New York on the presence of a historic opportunity to achieve peace in the region are not enough. Words should be coupled with deeds, and both words and wishes should be translated into facts on the ground.

The paper adds: If Peres is serious about seizing the opportunity for peace, and if he really wants to provide an appropriate atmosphere conducive to the revival of the negotiations, he ought to introduce some basic changes into the Israeli stand, which has become well known for its maneuvering and misleading tactics. He should also show greater determination and resolve to abide by the basic peace components.

The paper adds: Peres is well aware that Syria is firm in its position, which adheres to a just and comprehensive peace. He also knows that Syria is totally committed to the objective requirements of peace, and that it will spare no effort to achieve progress or a breakthrough in the peace process. In the meantime, Syria will continue to reject any proposal conducive to the relinquishment of right or land.

Concluding, the paper says: If peace is not based on the principles of right, justice, and comprehensiveness, it will not be a real and viable peace; it will merely be a temporary truce that may easily collapse. This is something Peres should bear in mind if he is sincere in his talk about the historic peace opportunity. [passage omitted]

Press Discusses 'Positive' Peres Statements

JN1312105795 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 0545 GMT 13 Dec 95

[Press review]

[FBIS Translated Text] In its editorial entitled "The Crossroads," the newspaper AL-THAWRAH points to the telephone call President Hafiz al-Asad received from U.S. President Bill Clinton. During this call, al-Asad asserted that Syria is serious about the peace process and is committed to it and to its bases, and that Syria is determined to achieve the set objective of this process.

AL-THAWRAH believes that this assertion is of extreme importance at this crucial phase in the peace process at a time of intensive U.S. efforts to end the dilemma of the peace process and to activate the Syrian-Israeli track in a positive way after removing the obstacles Israel has placed. These obstacles caused a state of dormancy in the Syrian and Lebanese tracks, and were about to lead to the wasting of the current peace opportunity.

AL-THAWRAH adds: Optimism over the Israeli enthusiasm to resume talks and to reach a comprehensive peace will remain cautious until learning the truth about what Peres carried to Washington and discussed with President Clinton as well as what Christopher will carry to Syria.

Concluding, AL-THAWRAH says: If we are to join the optimists, we can say that the hopes for creating a momentum to activate the Syrian track, and consequently, the Lebanese track, continue to be hinged upon what Christopher will carry from Peres' proposals in Washington. It can be said that the so-called integrated peace plan can activate the peace process toward its objective inasmuch as the Israeli proposals respond to the bases, constants, and pillars of the peace process and to the requirements and objective terms of peace.

In its editorial today, the newspaper AL-BA'TH says: All international viewpoints converge on the need to guarantee security and stability in the Middle East which has been unstable since the beginning of this century. Those interested in regional peace agree that the usurpation of the land and rendering its owners homeless are the basic barriers to the region's revival in terms of security, economy, and other walks of life.

AL-BA'TH adds: The region will not be stable as long as occupation exists. Hope will only materialize if there is response to what the international community has approved. The paper points to the fact that Syria is actually serious about proceeding with what it began in Madrid, provided that this approach should not be at the expense of the major basis of regaining the entire Golan and ruling out any presence regardless of its form and size. Shuttle diplomacy has ascertained the firmness of this fact.

AL-BA'TH asserts that the region is now in the middle of the road and is awaiting the Israeli side's courage and positive role which Peres announced in Washington. Courage in this context lies in publicly acknowledging what the world has approved and what the international community is seeking as well as acknowledging what the Labor Party promised the Israelis themselves in its election program in terms of paving the road for peace as a means to remain in power.

The paper adds: Courage is the absolute antithesis of aggressive behavior. It means embarking on what serves man and his aspirations. Is Israel courageous enough to end the region's suffering and disturbances?

AL-BA'TH believes that it has thus far been clear that the U.S. side is serious about activating the peace process and that Syria is serious about responding to the genuine, straightforward proposals that are devoid of procrastination and trickery.

Concluding, AL-BA'TH says: We will not make premature judgment of events. Syria has encouraged the U.S. mediator to continue his move, which provided an opportunity for a new tour by U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher. Moreover, the announced results of the U.S.-Israeli talks have renewed hope for establishing a just and comprehensive peace in the region in the near future. This is what the world aspires to as Christopher is about to embark on a new tour of the region. He will carry proposals designed to resume negotiations on the Syrian and Lebanese tracks, especially after Peres' positive statements.

In its editorial today entitled "A New Talk," the newspaper TISHRIN believes that what Shim'on Peres said during his current visit to Washington is a new position which is actually worth consideration.

The paper says: The Israeli prime minister said that he will resolve the differences on the Syrian track as soon as possible. He also said that to win peace is more important than winning the elections. Peres called for not looking backward while not forgetting about the past. He also called for taking into account the needs of each side.

TISHRIN continues: Peres added that he is ready to bridge the gaps with Syria, to begin comprehensive talks, and to discuss all topics at the same time. The paper believes that such positive statements only mean that Peres has moved forward in the right direction in order to activate the Syrian track and to provide the requirements of a just and comprehensive peace in the region. In this case, Peres will find a similar position. This has been the position of Damascus since the peace process began. Damascus has frequently stressed the need to deal comprehensively with the elements of the conflict and not to focus on one aspect while ignoring other aspects. This is because dividing the elements of peace undermined the peace process and froze the situation on the Syrian and Lebanese tracks.

TISHRIN points to the frequent Syrian assertions that a just peace is the only framework which will resolve the regional problems and guarantee security for all. Such an understanding of the importance of peace has been a significant point of difference with Israel because some Israeli politicians used to believe that achieving peace with Syria would lead to failure in the Israeli elections and that taking a hard line position and adhering to the policy of aggression and expansion will secure a wide popular base for this or that party in the Israeli community.

TISHRIN adds: It must be said that such an obsession, which used to overwhelm the Israeli politicians, has obstructed the opportunities of achieving peace with Syria and has plunged the region into a whirlpool of violence and tension. It has also created new problems for Israel itself. Hence, Peres' remark that peace is more important than winning the elections is a qualitative move in Israeli political thinking and an advanced step in the direction of consolidating realism in the Israeli policy and abandoning the illusions and idle slogans. This remark will definitely provide a better atmosphere to push the whole region toward the era of peace and prosperity.

Concluding, TISHRIN says: Damascus has announced its readiness to achieve a just and comprehensive settlement which will secure the rights and end the occupation of the Golan and [southern] Lebanon. The Israeli Government's adoption of a positive position on this issue will definitely open new horizons for achieving a real and comprehensive peace in the region.

Talas on Prospects for Peace With Israel

NC1212184995 Beirut AL-ANWAR in Arabic
4 Dec 95 pp 2, 15

[Report by Kamal Haydar in Zgharta]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Syrian Defense Minister General Mustafa Talas has stated that whenever a negotiation date approaches, Israel escalates the situation in southern Lebanon. He indicated that there will be no real peace without Lebanon and Syria. He, however, reaffirmed that the option of peace is stronger than the option of war. He said that the assassination of Yitzhaq Rabin has proven to the international community that terrorism, although blamed on Syrians and Lebanese, is rooted in Israel. The roots of international terrorism are found in Israel.

Talas' remarks came during his visit to Zgharta to convey President Hafiz al-Asad's condolences on the death of Iris Franjiyah, widow of late President Sulayman Franjiyah. [passage omitted]

Regarding developments in southern Lebanon, Gen. Talas said: Whenever a negotiation date approaches, Israel tries to escalate the situation in the south to speak from a position of strength at the talks. I don't believe that Lebanon and Syria don't know this game; they know it very well. They will continue the normal dialogue [hiwar tabi'i]. There will be no real peace without Lebanon and Syria. But as Palestinian intellectual Edward Said has stated, the peace which we have witnessed so far has made Yasir 'Arafat an employee of Israel. We in Syria and Lebanon do not accept this peace. We accept the UN resolutions — full withdrawal from all areas in the Golan and southern Lebanon, and full peace and full relations [salam shamil wa 'alaqat shamilah]. We do not accept any obstacles or conditions. [passage omitted]

Assembly Member on Contact With Israel's Netanyahu

JN1312070495 Paris Radio Monte Carlo in Arabic
0500 GMT 13 Dec 95

[Report by Thana' al-Imam in Damascus]

[FBIS Translated Text] Shakib Abu-Jabal, member of the Syrian People's Assembly, said that the telephone call he received from Israeli television on Monday [11 December], through which he conducted a televised debate with Likud Party leader Netanyahu, was a surprise made without prior notice.

In exclusive statements to Radio Monte Carlo, Abu-Jabal denied that this debate was a planned step on the path of normalization with the Jewish state. He pointed out that normalization cannot take place through a telephone call.

Abu-Jabal, who was imprisoned for 12 years in Israel and who arrived in Syria in 1984 as part of an exchange of prisoners, asserted that he insisted that his son, who is from Majdal Shams, should attend the debate to translate from Arabic to Hebrew and vice versa. He also pointed out that Netanyahu requested him to carry a message calling on President al-Asad to achieve peace.

Abu-Jabal, who indicated that his viewpoint does not commit anyone, said that the Israeli Government and opposition officials say what suits them. Since Madrid, we have been moving in a vicious circle. He added: I asserted to Netanyahu that we want a just and comprehensive peace in a clear way that does not pass through vestibules and tunnels.

Abu-Jabal is from Majdal Shams. He is a member of the Syrian People's Assembly serving a third consecutive term.

Al-Shar' Returns From ICO Conference

JN1212201095 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1915 GMT 12 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Foreign Minister Faruq al-Shar' returned to Damascus this afternoon after taking part in the 23d ministerial council of the foreign ministers of the Islamic Conference Organization.

He was seen off at Conakry Airport by Jean Traore, Guinean minister of urbanism and habitat; senior Gunean Foreign Ministry employees; and the Arab community in Guinea.

Afghanistan

Taleban Continues Assualt on Kabul Area

Rockets Kill 3 in Kabul

LD1212165695 Kabul Radio Afghanistan Network in Pashto 1530 GMT 12 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] The hireling Taleban fired rockets into Kabul today. As a result three Kabul residents were martyred. BAKHTAR reported that five rockets landed in the residential areas this morning when three Kabul residents were martyred and eight others injured. The hireling Taleban fired the rockets from the south. In addition to casualties, the rockets also caused material damage.

Launches Attack on Kabul Frontlines

BK1312093695 Hong Kong AFP in English 0855 GMT 13 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] KABUL Dec 13 (AFP) — The Taleban militia launched a two-pronged attack on Kabul's southern frontlines and a rocket barrage on the city centre, defence officials and witnesses said Wednesday [13 December].

"The Taleban made a coordinated but small scale onslaught from two points south of Kabul, but we successfully repulsed the attempt," a defence ministry officials said.

The heavy artillery and rocket attack on two of the three frontlines where the Islamic fighters are besieging the city came late Tuesday, but neither side won or lost any ground, the official added.

Meanwhile the Taleban, who have been encamped around Kabul since mid-October, fired 20 Soviet-built BM 21 rockets into Kabul Wednesday, killing a four-and-a-half year-old girl and wounding two other civilians, defence sources and witnesses told AFP.

The little girl died when a rocket from the salvo struck her family home in the area housing the city's disused airport, local residents said.

"She was playing so happily in the living room, and seconds later she was dead," her distraught father who refused to be named said.

"What harm had such an innocent child done? We are just praying that the killing in our country will end soon before we have no more future," he added.

Another rocket hit two other houses in the area, causing severe damage but claiming no casualties, while the remaining 20 hit the general area around the airport or nearby fields, witnesses said.

The defence ministry blamed the barrage on the Taleban, although no independent confirmation was immediately available of who carried out the attack.

More than 112 civilians died in a renewed spate of rocket attacks and bombing raids on residential areas of Kabul in November, witnesses and aid groups here said.

The government has consistently accused the Taleban, who have pledged to topple the government and to impose Islamic law on the whole country, for the attacks.

Shells Kabul Airport With Artillery

LD1312104095 Tehran IRNA in English 1023 GMT 13 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Kabul, Dec. 13, IRNA — The Taleban group fired about 30 Katyusha rockets and long-range artillery shells on Kabul international airport and its surrounding residential quarters on Wednesday [13 December].

A source at Kabul Security Commission announcing this said that two rockets hit the Kabul airport terminal building devastating part of it.

The same source added that apart from inflicting damage on the building, damage was also sustained on the airport equipment.

The residents around the airport have mostly left their homes due to the continuous artillery attacks of Taleban, adding that for that same reason the long-range artillery shelling of Wednesday had no casualties.

It is said that following the Taleban threat to shell areas around Kabul airport, hundreds of residents have left their homes and thus have became homeless.

Kabul internatnal airport has been closed down since last month and all passenger and cargo flights of Afghanistan Government are being carried out from Bagram airbase, 60 km north of Kabul.

Bangladesh

President Calls For Peace, Comments on 'Crisis'

BK1312142295 Hong Kong AFP in English 1605 GMT 12 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] DHAKA, Dec 12 (AFP) — Bangladesh President Abdur Rahman Biswas on Tuesday [11 December] appealed for unity and peace as the opposition announced a fresh anti-government campaign, with a strike called for December 17.

In his first comments on the crisis, Biswas told business leaders, "unless we can forge unity amongst oursleves, we cannot go ahead with development."

Biswas's comments, quoted by BSS news agency, came amid speculation that the government might ask him to refer opposition demands to the Supreme Court.

Opposition leader Sheikh Hasina Wajed's Awami League has said talks to end a 20-month standoff could take place only after Prime Minister Khaleda Zia resigned and allowed President Biswas to form an interim government ahead of general elections.

Zia last month decided to dissolve parliament and called fresh elections for January 18 but is yet to accede to the opposition demand that she step down ahead of the polls and make way for a neutral caretaker administration.

The opposition says fair polls are impossible under Zia, while she has slammed the call for a caretaker government as unconstitutional.

The opposition, meanwhile, announced late Tuesday a nationwide 24-hour general strike for December 17 and demonstrations around polling offices the following day to coincide with filing of nomination papers for the elections.

Opposition sources denied a newspaper report that the government had offered the opposition a new olive branch and talks were under way at various levels.

Zia's BNP staged an "anti-terrorist" march Tuesday, a move political observers here said was aimed at demonstrating the ruling party's support base, in response to the opposition's three-day nationwide general strike that ended at dawn Tuesday.

The government-owned Dainik Bangla newspaper criticised the opposition for staging the strikes, saying they brought "miseries" to the people and that in a democracy, differences must be resolved through "democratically accepted means."

Seven people have died and scores have been injured in the standoff.

At the meeting with President Biswas Tuesday, Salman Rahman, a leading businessman, appealed to him to find a solution to the crisis, saying it was hurting the economy.

'Minor Clashes' Reported on Third Day of Strike

BK1112163895 Dhaka Radio Bangladesh Network in Bengali 1500 GMT 11 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] The third day of the three-day strike called by some opposition parties in the country passed peacefully today except for some minor clashes between supporters of the strike and those opposed to it. At least 14 people, including five police personnel, were injured in clashes in different parts of the capital. Police said that strike supporters detonated bombs at important locations in the capital with a view to terrorizing the people and enforcing the strike.

A large number of rickshaws plied the city streets, but motor vehicles were off the roads. Buses did not operate on inter-district routes. Railway sources said that trains on the Chittagong line ran up to Laksham. The movement of trains from Laksham to Chittagong was disrupted as strike supporters erected barricades at different places. Sadarghat launch terminal sources said that almost half of the scheduled number of launches coming from outside Dhaka arrived at the terminal, but almost all launches leaving the terminal carried only a few passengers. Airport sources said all domestic and international flights operated on schedule.

Attendance in government, autonomous, and private offices was normal and work continued as usual. Banks and other financial institutions were open but transactions were few. In Dhaka and other regions of the country, production in different units of the Bangladesh Chemical Industries Corporation, Bangladesh Sugar and Food Industries Corporation, and Bangladesh Steel and Engineering Corporation was normal.

Bangladesh Railway has decided to operate all intercity trains without any break for a period of one week starting tomorrow. This decision has been made in view of the hardships of passengers stuck in different parts of the country due to the strike.

A big procession to protest the strike took place on Green Road. This procession passed through various streets and ended at the Kalabagan bus stop. At the end of the procession, speakers addressed a rally and criticized the organizers of the strike, saying they are not concerned about the untold hardships suffered by the people due to the continuous strikes.

India

Ministry Protests to U.S. Over Kashmir Remarks

BK0912141895 Delhi THE HINDUSTAN TIMES in English 8 Dec 95 p 1

[FBIS Transcribed Text] India today conveyed to the United States its "displeasure" over the language used by the US State Department while reacting to Home Minister S.B. Chavan's observation in Parliament about the American objectives in Jammu and Kashmir.

The US Charge d'Affaires in India, Mr Mathew Dailey, was summoned to the Foreign Office here by Mr Vinod

Grover, Secretary (West) in the Ministry of External Affairs [MEA]. The Indian official told Mr Dailey that Mr Chavan had made the statement in the Rajya Sabha and Members of Parliament were exercised over the use of expressions like "nonsense" in the State Department's reaction.

Mr Grover spoke to Mr Dailey as the US Ambassador to India. Mr Frank Wisner is currently away to Washington. He told the American diplomat that New Delhi expected use of "diplomatic language" in the conduct of bilateral relations. While there may be areas of disagreement between the two countries, they also agreed on many issues.

The MEA's protest to Washington, it appears, it confined to the language used by the State Department. The spokesman of the US Embassy here, while responding to Mr Chavan's charges had formulated his reaction differently.

Contrary to what has been reported in a section of the Indian Press, there was no telephonic conversation between Mr Grover and Dailey on Tuesday [5 December], regarding Mr Chavan's remarks. A formal protest was lodged by the US side at the level of Mr Dilip Lahiri, Joint Secretary (America) in the MEA, with whom Mr Dailey spoke on phone upon failing to get through to Mr Grover.

Later, however, the US Charge d'Affaires happened to meet Mr Grover at the Thai National Day function yesterday where the informally told the Indian official that Washington was "upset" over Mr Chavan's statement in which he accused the US, among other things, of instigating violence in Kashmir.

The language employed by the US State Department while rejecting Mr Chavan's allegations has, in fact, shocked diplomatic observers here. Two former External Affairs Ministers, Mr I.K. Gujral and Mr Natwar Singh, took strong exception to it in a statement issued today.

Meanwhile, Home Minister S.B. Chavan on Wednesday said that India would not allow Pakistan to come in the way of holding elections in Jammu and Kashmir by deploying foreign mercenaries to create violence in the State, reports UNI from Delhi.

The Home Minister, who met a South Asian delegation of the European Parliament, said that Pakistan was making every effort to create destabilising conditions in India.

"It is deeply involved in the internal affairs of India by providing training camps for the militants on its soil and supplying equipment for their nefarious operations," he said.

The delegation included Ms Anita Pollack, Mr Thomas Mann, Ms Patricia Mekenna and Mr Robert Evans. Home Secretary K. Padmanabiah was also present at the meeting during which it was felt that the two sides needed to cooperate in fighting terrorism and drug trafficking in economic spheres.

The Minister said that despite of escalation of efforts by the neighbours in Kashmir to prevent the democratic process of election, the Government was determine to hold polls. He said that after six years of turmoil created by Pakistan sponsored terrorism, the local militants had realised their folly and therefore Pakistan had taken recourse to deploying foreign mercenaries.

Mr Chavan said the situation in Punjab had been similar to that of Jammu and Kashmir, but after holding elections there, it had become quite normal.

Mr Padmanabhiah briefed the members about the internal situation with reference to Jammu and Kashmir, adding that the present crisis was due to cross-border terrorism.

Daily: Minister's Anti-U.S. Remarks Deliberate

BK1212104595 Delhi INDIAN EXPRESS in English 11 Dec 95 p 9

[Article by Neerja Chowdhury]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] LAST week, it was Home Minister S.B. Chavan's turn to make waves. First he attended the function to celebrate the completion of two years of the Madan Lal Khurana Government. Then he accused the U.S. of harbouring "evil designs" in Kashmir the first set off under-currents in the Congress party, the second created a diplomatic storm. [sentence as published]

Theoretically speaking, there is nothing objectionable about the Home Minister taking part in a function to felicitate the Delhi Chief Minister. But the function was overwhelmingly a BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party] affair. And it came soon after the Maharaja Governments celebration of Chavan's 75th birthday; which had provoked a sharp reaction from several Congressmen about his hobnobbing with the BJP.

The affair might have been innocent had it not been for the fact that this is election time and there is a political flux in the country. More importantly, Mr Chavan was sharing a platform with the top BJP leaders on the same day that the Delhi Pradesh Congress Committee [DPCC] had organised a "black day" against the alleged misdemeanours of the BJP Government. And oddly enough, Mr Chavan had refused to heed the pleadings of a DPCC delegation which went to see him (three weeks before the programme), not once but twice, to stay away from the function.

Mr Chavan's term in the Rajya Sabha ends in April, 1996. He is one of five Congress MPs from Maharashtra who will retire, while the strength of the party in the Assembly can ensure nomination of only two. The others, including Union ministers Ghulam Nabi Azad and N.K.P. Salve, will no doubt try and seek renomination. Though the Prime Minister will have a say in deciding who makes it to the upper House, so will Chavan's bete noire, former chief minister Sharad Pawar.

It would only be natural for the Home Minister to keep his options open for contesting the Lok Sabha elections from Nanded, and to guard against the possibility of sabotage by Mr Pawar. That may be one reason for the Home Minister trying to soften the BJP and the Shiv Sena to elicit their tacit support if necessary.

More importantly, the uncertainty over the post-election scenario and the coalition possibilities it may throw up could also explain the recent signs of bonhomie between Chavan and the BJP.

It is, however, Mr Chavan's sharp attack against the U.S. which has raised a storm. Chavan is a known U.S. baiter. It is not so much the target of his ire as the timing and ferocity of his assault that is significant.

The Home Minister has killed three birds with one stone. Instead of receiving flak on the Kashmir poll fiasco, he was patted on the back by the entire Opposition at the end of his speech on Kashmir. With his strong words against the U.S., Mr Chavan managed to deflect scrutiny from the Government's inept handling of a sensitive issue.

Secondly, U.S. bashing can reap political dividends in the run-up to elections and Mr Chavan is already beginning to emerge as something of a hero. It is not known whether it would yield the Congress additional votes but the move can preempt the BJP from making national unity and security a poll issue.

However, Mr Chavan's strong indictment of the U.S. cannot be a political ploy only. In recent months, the Government has been under pressure from the U.S. to agree to several things - its mediation between India and Pakistan; international observers for the Jammu and Kashmir elections; and waiving off the oath of allegiance to the Indian Constitution as a precondition for participation in the elections.

Besides the Brown Amendment facilitating the Clinton Administration to supply arms worth $368 million to Pakistan (the announcement was made when Mr Narasimha Rao was in the U.S.), what has also made the Government unhappy is the "turnaround" in the U.S. stand on elections in Jammu and Kashmir.

It is said that the U.S. backed down on support it had assured Mr Rao for elections and its promise to rein in Pakistan and the ISI [Inter Service Intelligence]. The Ministry of External Affairs links the complete silence on the part of the U.S. Administration (once it became clear that the Government was serious about holding elections) to its resolve not to queer the pitch for Benazir Bhutto in any way. U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Robin Raphel had apparently admitted in her interactions with the Ministry officials last year that elections in Jammu and Kashmir could destabilise the Bhutto Government. (The Indian Government has noted the pro-U.S. statements made by Dr Farooq Abdullah after his "volte face" on participation in the polls. Its plans for polls in the northern State collapsed when the National Conference leader decided not to take part in the polls.)

South Block fears that the going could get tougher in the troubled State if the Pakistani-backed Taleban captures power in Kabul. (Ms Raphel during her recent visit to Afghanistan had suggested that President Rabbani step down and make way for an interim commission, which would include the fundamentalist Taleban). Islamabad then would be better placed to divert men and materials to Jammu and Kashmir and foment more trouble there. An elected government in Srinagar is better placed to meet any such challenge and would enjoy greater credibility than rule from the Centre.

Only the politically naive would believe that the Home Minister could have charged the U.S. of "evil designs" in Kashmir without mentioning the matter to the Prime Minister first. The "foot in the mouth" affliction which Mr Chavan is supposed to suffer from is a convenient political weapon in the hands of the Prime Minister. Mr Rao had made a milder statement when he expressed "some anxiety" at the Congress Parliamentary Party meet about the pro-Pakistani tilt in U.S. policy. Mr Chavan's broadside is the latest - though the strongest - expression of the Government's unhappiness with U.S. policy in recent weeks.

During her last visit here some weeks ago, Ms Raphel was not given the kind of reception accorded to her last year when she was received by Home Minister Chavan. This time no Minister, or even officials from ministries other than External Affairs, met her. After the initial reactions, the response of both South Block (terming the U.S. reaction as "undiplomatic") and Washington (Ms Raphel ruling out plebiscite in Kashmir) shows that neither wants to escalate the controversy.

The U.S. reaction to Mr Chavan's statement ridiculing the Home Minister (a U.S. State department official dismissed it by saying that "Mr Chavan pops off like that once a month or so on his own. He is an embarrassment to his colleagues in the Indian Government") called for a stronger reaction from South Block. The Prime Minister should have either defended his Home Minister or pulled him up for overdoing it.

Tajikistan President Continues Official Visit

BK1212161695 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1530 GMT 12 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] India and Tajikistan today signed six agreements to strengthen bilateral relations. This follows official talks between Mr. Narasimha Rao and the visiting Tajik president, Mr. Rakhmanov, in New Delhi today. The two sides agreed to cooperate closely to combat terrorism in the region. Both Mr. Rao and Mr. Rakhmanov called upon all the countries in the region to build their relations by respecting the present bilateral agreements and the principles of peaceful coexistence.

The agreement on the joint commission calls for identifying new areas and forms of cooperation. Cooperation in science and technology, cultural exchange programs, environment protection, and health care are the other areas covered in the remaining accords.

Replying to questions at a press conference, President Rakhmanov expressed concern over the developments in Afghanistan and called for a peaceful settlement. He declared that Tajikistan will not allow entry of fundamentalist and extremist forces. He supported President Rabbani's efforts to achieve peace in Afghanistan and said Tajikistan does not support outside interference in the internal affairs of any nation.

'Up to One Brigade' Offered for UN Peacekeeping

BK1212013695 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1530 GMT 11 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] India has agreed to offer troops up to one brigade strength for UN standby forces. This follows a request by UN secretary general to member states for designated military units to deploy for UN peacekeeping operations at short notice. The minister of state for external affairs, Mr. R.L. Bhatia, said the standby force will be deployed only for peacekeeping operations and expenditure incurred will be reimbursed by the United Nations according to its guidelines.

Simultaneous Lok Sabha, Assembly Elections Rejected

BK0612162695 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1530 GMT 6 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Elections to the state assemblies wherever due before next July will be held along with the Lok Sabha elections. The term of the Lok Sabha is to expire by July next year. An Election Commission press note in New Delhi today said that all the by-elections to the state assemblies, excepting where court cases are pending, will also be held simultaneously. This is also an exception to those where the remaining term of the assemblies is less than 12 months. [sentence as heard]

The Congress-I spokesman, Mr. V.N. Gadgil, says he does not favor simultaneous elections to the Lok Sabha and state assemblies. Replying to questions at a party briefing in New Delhi today, he said the Congress-I wants a mandate on national issues in the general elections. This will not be possible if local issues are mixed with national issues, he said.

Daily Views Muslim Vote in Lok Sabha Elections

BK0812164195 Delhi OUTLOOK in English 6 Dec 95 p 7, 8

[Article by Padmanand Jha: "Who Will the Muslims Vote For?"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text]*WITH the next Lok Sabha elections at best five to six months away, every political party or combine is busy honing its strategy to woo various sections of the electorate. Since the Muslims constitute almost 12 per cent of the voters, it is quite understandable that the political parties—particularly the Congress and the National Front—are courting them in right earnest. The effort is greater because of the general feeling that the Muslims tend to vote en bloc. It was in this context that Outlook commissioned MODE to conduct an all-India poll among the Muslims to get an idea of their perception of various political parties and leaders.*

In all, 1,484 adult Muslims were interviewed in eight cities in the third week of November—Delhi, Calcutta, Bombay, Hyderabad, Kanpur, Patna, Ahmedabad and Calicut. Care was taken to ensure that the interviewees cut across various income groups. The findings are largely on expected lines, but there are a few surprises as well.

According to the 1981 census, there are 46 Lok Sabha constituencies with 25 per cent or more Muslims in the electorate. Of these, 35 have more than 30 per cent Muslim voters. In a tight finish, which is expected in *the next battle of the ballot, the Muslim voter could well prove to be one of the more crucial factors in the selection of the party or combine to rule New Delhi in 1996.*

THERE is both good news and bad news for the Congress. The good news is that the party is still seen as the most committed to the protection of minority interests by the Muslim community. As many as 42 per cent of those polled gave the ruling party at the Centre the edge in this regard. The bad news is that the Muslims have yet to recover fully from the psychological scars of the December 6, 1992 demolition of the Babri Masjid in Ayodhya. An alarmingly high number—62 per cent—hold Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao personally responsible for the razing of the shrine and the majority (51 per cent) feel that the Congress could increase its share of the minority votes if it had someone other than Rao to lead it at the hustings.

However, there are as yet no clear favourites among the clutch of Congress leaders as far as the minority community is concerned. With no real challenger to Rao's leadership of the party discernible, the Prime Minister, with 22 per cent support, is still ahead of Arjun Singh who is the second favourite "Congress leader" with 19 per cent support. The surprise sprung by the poll is the rapid ascendancy of young Rajesh Pilot, who is just 3 per cent behind Arjun Singh. C.K. Jaffer Sharief, who quit the Cabinet last week, is a distant fourth with just 12 per cent support from his own community. Pilot draws most of his support from the national capital with 39 per cent of the interviewees favouring him here (as against Rao's 16 per cent), while Rao makes up lost ground in his home state capital, Hyderabad.

In fact, the lack of faith in any single Congress leader is evident fram the large percentage of people saying categorically that none of the named leaders was really committed to minority interests. The number of such respondents was as high as 26 per cent, and only the BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party] leaders have managed to evake such a high level of cynicism with 49 percent Muslims favouring no saffron leader.

The National Front-Left Front [NF-LF] combine now has greater reason to woo former Uttar Pradesh chief minister Mulayam Singh Yadav back into the fold. The state has 17 (out of a total of 85) Lok Sabha constituencies where the Muslims constitute 25 per cent and more of the electorate. And Yadav is the clear favourite with a whopping 63 per cent respondents in Kanpur favouring him over any other combine leader. Yadav also scores an impressive 24 per cent at the all-India level, a clear 5 per cent ahead of former prime minister V.P. Singh, who seems to have lost ground after his declaration that he was retiring from active politics. The NF-LF combine can also take heart from the fact that they outscore the Congress convincingly wherever they are in a dominant position. They are assured of the bulk of the minority support in West Bengal and Bihar and, should the alliance with Yadav come off, they could be in a good position in Uttar Pradesh too.

As far as the BJP is concerned, it is not surprising that it finds the support of only 6 per cent Muslims at the all-India level. But by declaring senior leader Atal Behari Vajpayee as its prime ministerial candidatev the party seems to be on the right track. Asked to choose between various BJP leaders, 29 per cent of the respondents favoured this liberal face of the BJP over perceived hardliners like L.K. Advani. Advani got less than one-third of the votes polled by Vajpayee and ranked a distant second with a mere 9 per cent.

But what about the impression that Muslims tend to vote en bloc more than any other community or section of society? Social scientist Ashis Nandy feels that over the years, the Muslims along with the Dalits and the Jats have been known to vote blockwise more than any other segment. But, he hastens to add that this does not mean that close to a 100 per cent vote similarly. Studies have shown that when a political party or combine gets the "block vote" of one section, it secures between 15 and 20 per cent more votes from this segment than its overall average from other communities. D.L. Sheth, a member of the Backward Classes Commission, and a man who has studied the phenomenon, feels that the tendency of the Muslims to vote en bloc has increased since the Ayodhya demolition. It was much more pronounced in the assembly elections in 1993, '94 and '95. But he also points out that the Muslim votes, because of their demographic distribution, have the capacity to influence assembly election results much more profoundly than parliamentary polls.

Iran

Radio on U.S. Senate's 'Symbolic' Sanctions Bill

LD1312132895 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran in English 1130 GMT 13 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Excerpt] U.S. Banking Committee's Senate [as heard], on Tuesday, December 12, passed a bill granting new authorities to the U.S. Government allowing it to tighten economic sanctions against the Islamic Republic of Iran. The bill has actually been designed by the head of the committee, Alfonse D'Amato. The bill is aimed at tightening the sanctions against Iran and limiting cooperation or any transactions between Iranian and non-American companies in the fields of gas and oil projects.

Hence, should the Senate and the U.S. House of Representatives pass the bill, Clinton would have the authority to take measures against countries striking oil deals with Iran. [passage omitted]

Political and economic experts maintain that the new U.S. plan is, in fact, a moderate version of what had earlier been proposed by Senator D'Amato; but since the former version stood no chance of winning over the Senate and Congress, it has been replaced by a moderate plan.

U.S. officials have, on various occasions, reiterated that they would deploy their political, economic might to hold Iran's gas and oil development projects in check. Such an endeavor has failed to bear any fruit so far, and on July 13, after the French company of Total signed a contract on the expansion of Siri's oil resources in the Persian Gulf, further indications of America's severe setback came to light.

Anyhow, U.S. statesmen's efforts to prevent a repetition of similar agreements between Iran and other oil companies are mostly to be considered as symbolic, political acts than an efficient economic one. U.S. officials are fully aware of this fact. However, political considerations and pressure exerted by the ruling Zionist faction on [the] U.S. Congress and Government has cornered Mr. Clinton, leaving him no way out. Now, it is up to he himself to think of something rational and practical.

SALAM on U.S. Ties, Freedom of Speech

*NC1112150095 Tehran SALAM in Persian
26 Nov 95 p 3*

[From the "Hello SALAM" column]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [Unidentified caller] I think we should give in a little bit regarding establishing relations with the United States. Israel is a different issue because it is a Zionist country. We gave in a little bit on many issues concerning Iraq so that, by establishing relations, the situation of its 60-million strong population could improve in the future.

[SALAM] The most important point regarding the establishment of relations with the United States may be that some people—especially pro- Western intellectuals—believe our existing problems can be overcome through such relations. In other words, they have the same idea that the shah's regime did. And we saw that the shah denigrated the nation so much that, according to the Imam—may his soul be sanctified—Iran became a U.S. gendarme and cook, and if the country's highest official was insulted, nothing could be done here, the issue had to be followed up in the United States.

The second problem in the establishment of relations with the United States is its hegemonistic attitude and its habit of denigrating all the governments and nations with which it establishes relations. It does this so that it can dominate them, plunder them, and treat them in any way it wants. But the most important point is that anyone who brings up the topic of relations with the United States is doing so out of need and weakness—although he feigns self-confidence—and precisely because he lacks self-confidence. Such people consider the United States to be a superior power that can solve all problems, and they want to feel strong through the establishment of links with it. However, we should accept the fact that the United States is the great Satan because, despite all its weaknesses, it has been able to entice nations into believing that it is so strong that it can overcome anyone's weaknesses and shortcomings, that it can open up closed doors, and that whoever goes to it will find humanitarian feelings. But it is for all these reasons that the establishment of relations with the United States is detrimental to nations. The reason why we think differently about relations with other countries is that we do not want to accept imposed demands. Thus, the U.S. Government continues to be a danger.

[Unidentified caller] For some time now, SALAM has been publishing items about freedom of speech in the Islamic Republic of Iran. I would like to make some major criticisms regarding the way the newspaper discusses this topic:

The newspaper has not tried to deal with the main source of these restrictions. Is it true that freedom of speech restrictions by the forces defending the revolution started with obstacles being placed in front of candidates' participation by the Militant Clerics in the fourth term elections? Can one believe that the people at SALAM have forgotten the realities of how the labor forces and groups in Iran's revolution were deprived of the freedom of speech? They [SALAM officials] may even deny such realities or they may prefer to cast the issue into oblivion because they too participated in imposing these restrictions. At any rate, propounding the freedom of speech topic in Iran without explaining the facts pertaining to it is neither sincere nor realistic. Apparently, SALAM officials want to learn from the experiences of the Islamic revolution for the future of the revolution. If so, why do they remain silent on realities that have previously existed in the revolution?

[SALAM] We have never claimed that all the events that have taken place since the beginning of the revolution were correct and that no mistakes were made. Even His Eminence the Imam described our interim government as a mistake, let alone the others. Basically speaking, is there a person or group which can claim to have not made any mistakes over dozens of years? But the greatest mistake of all is for someone to cross out a great revolution like the Islamic Revolution for the sake of a few mistakes. This was a revolution in which almost everyone participated, and after its victory too the nation and the choice part that emerged from it scored great achievements, overcame serious dangers, created a new military structure, and stood firmly despite all the hostility and obstructions by the big powers. Mistakes were made; and it can be said that the bigger the social movement, the bigger its mistakes. Now if we want to tread a better path to the future, we should carefully review our past mistakes and chart a course for the future on the basis of the valuable experience that we gained. Therefore, we are at the disposal of the dear reader to tell us which labor parties he is referring to, why these parties did not last, and who were to blame for this? We will discuss the topic after we receive his explanations. [passage omitted]

'West' Said Concerned About Saudi Succession

LD1212191095 Tehran IRNA in English 1848 GMT 12 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] London, Dec. 12, IRNA — Concern about succession in Saudi Arabia and the likely effect on world oil markets has re-emerged here following King Fahd being hospitalised earlier this month.

Similar fears are shared in other Persian Gulf states, where there are ageing rulers with no established channels for the transfer of power.

The eternal problem facing Saudi Arabia, which for the past forty years has only been ruled by sons of its founder, 'Abd-al-'Aziz, is passing succession on to the next generation.

The Wahhabi chieftan 'Abd-al-'Aziz who established his hegemony over the greater part of the Arabian peninsula in the 1930s after a bloody trail of massacres and destruction of holy places, reportedly sired 45 sons from 22 different wives without leaving any legacy.

The central concern in the West relates to the country being the world's largest oil producer and a milk cow for the U.S. and its allies, who are loathe to see a popular uprising against the feudal rule or an untidy transfer of power in the totalitarian family itself.

With no clear candidate, the West's worry is that dangerous divisions might be opened in the ruling family, remembering how Western interests were affected by the overthrow of the Shah of Iran in the 1979 Islamic Revolution.

The West fears that political crisis within the elite even through an Islamic upsurge cannot be ruled out.

Velayati Leaves for Bosnia Conference in Paris

LD1212201595 Tehran IRNA in English 1907 GMT 12 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Conakry (Guinea), Dec. 12, IRNA — Iranian Foreign Minister 'Ali Akbar Velayati left here tonight for Paris to take part in the joint meeting of the contact groups on Bosnia of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) and the western countries to be held on Wednesday [13 December], in order to discuss the Dayton accord on the Bosnian issue.

Iran, Pakistan, Turkey, Malaysia, Senegal, Maghreb, Egypt and Saudi Arabia are the eight member states of the OIC contact group whereas the Western contact group is made up of Germany, France, Britain, Russia and the U.S.

In his press interview held here on Monday night at the end of the coordination meeting of the Islamic contact group, Velayati called as "unjust" the accord signed under U.S. auspices at Dayton, Ohio, and said that Muslims should assist Bosnia in order to ensure its defense needs.

He also called upon Muslim countries to take part in the reconstruction process of that war-stricken Muslim republic of the Balkans.

The Iranian foreign minister was in the Guinean capital since last Friday for the 23rd ministerial meeting of the Organization of [the] Islamic Conference (OIC).

During his stay here Velayati and his delegation also met with Guinean President Lansana Conte, Parliament Speaker Al-Haj Bubakr Biro Diallo, Foreign Minister Cozo Zoumanigui, OIC Secretary-general Hamid al-Gabid and several foreign ministers of OIC member states.

Anniversary of UN Resolution on Iraq War Hailed

LD0912113995 Tehran IRNA in English 1057 GMT 9 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] United Nations, New York, Dec 9 (IRNA) — Today marks the fourth anniversary of the confirmation of Iran's legitimacy in the Iraqi imposed war by one of the world's most important bodies.

In a report to the security council four years ago this day, the then U.N. Secretary General, Javier Perez de Cuellar, officially announced that according to the 6th paragraph of Resolution 598, the Baghdad regime was responsible for initiating the war against Iran.

He explicitly said that Iraq invaded the Iranian territory on September 22, 1980.

De Cuellar stressed that in the light of the U.N. Charter, the internationally recognized rules and regulations and international etiquettes, Iraq's invasion was by no means justifiable.

Following a request by the U.N. Security Council for the identification of the party responsible for Iraq-Iran war, De Cuellar undertook to fulfill the task before termination of his tenure. Therefore, he called on the two countries to file comprehensive reports and inform him of their views on how the war had broken out.

After investigations by independent experts, the secretary general considered as unacceptable the reasons put forward by Iraq and stressed that Iraq's explanations were not acceptable and sufficient to the world community.

Iran's permanent representative to the United Nations Dr. Kamal Kharrazi [name as received], said Friday [8 December] in this connection that while during the imposed war most countries supported the Baghdad government, branding Iraq as the aggressor was a great political victory for the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Such a victory was gained by the Islamic Republic of Iran at a time when a double standard criteria prevailed in the United Nations, he added.

Kharrazi said that the success was achieved thanks to the devotion shown by Iranian Muslim combatants and resistance of the people who managed to drive the enemy out of Iranian territory.

He added that De Cuellar's report issued in December 1991, was a confirmation by an important international body of Iran being the aggressed and Iraq being the aggressor party in the 1980-88 imposed war.

As De Cuellar declared in his report, had the Resolution 598 been implemented on time, a second aggression would not have occurred in the Persian Gulf region, Iraq would not have invaded Kuwait, he said.

Turning to the Resolution 598 and its implementation, he said some of its paragraphs have not been executed yet, including release of all prisoners of war, security arrangements for the region and obligations to be met by the aggressor on the basis of international laws and regulations.

He expressed hope that the current U.N. Secretary General, Butrus Butrus-Ghali, would take the necessary measures to implement the remaining paragraphs of Resolution 598.

Daily Links Bonn Incident With Stand on Rabin

NC1212125995 Tehran KEYHAN in Persian 29 Nov 95 p 2

["Special Report" column]

[FBIS Translated Text] On Saturday 27 Aban 1334 [18 November 1995] the wife of an Iranian Embassy staff employee in Germany, who was shopping at one of Bonn's supermarkets, was harassed by two members of the monafeqin [pejorative for the Mojahedin-e Khalq Organization] group. Not only did the policemen who came to the scene not show the least bit of reaction despite complaints by the lady and supermarket employees and the manager, they also displayed extreme indifference and tried to portray the incident as an ordinary issue, and thus helped the monafeqin get away. In the past similar incidents of attacks by the monafeqin and other fugitive counterrevolutionary groups against Muslim Iranian ladies have taken place. However, during the last few years, such acts had decreased because of the counterrevolutionaries' fear of being expelled or of losing the refugee benefits they receive from European countries. Also, on the basis of reliable information and confessions by repentant monafeqin members, the members of this group do not carry out such acts unless they have implicit permission from the police.

The Bonn supermarket incident could not have taken place without the prior consent of the police, especially since the police very indifferently ignored the complaints by the Iranian lady, the salesman, and the manager of the supermarket and, contrary to standard norms, supported the monafeqin assaulters and helped them escape.

It should be noted that a few days before the above incident, the wife of another Iranian Embassy employee in Germany who was walking in the city dressed in Islamic attire was assaulted by the monafeqin.

Existing facts show that the recent molestations have been supported by the German police. But it is surprising how the German officials have resorted to such ridiculous and childish attempts in order to express their dissatisfaction over the Islamic Republic's just stance on Yitzhaq Rabin's assassination.

After the declaration of the clear, just, and wise stand by the esteemed president of the Islamic Republic of Iran on the assassination of Rabin, the terrorist and criminal Israeli prime minister, which was also the stand of the entire Iranian nation, in addition to the cancellation of Dr. Velayati's visit to Germany, Foreign Minister Kinkel sent a letter to Dr. Velayati criticizing the Islamic Republic's reaction to Rabin's assassination. But naturally, the Muslim Iranian Government and nation ignores such criticisms. However, it is very regrettable that despite the German people's extreme hatred and aversion toward Israel, the German Government continues to allow the Zionists the right to interfere in Germany's affairs.

Larijani on Need for Ending Afghanistan Conflict

*NC1212135295 Tehran RESALAT in Persian
30 Nov 95 pp 1, 16*

[Editorial by Mohammad Javad Larijani: "What Is Happening in Afghanistan!"]

[FBIS Translated Text] 1. During the past year, Afghanistan's political scene has witnessed major changes. On the one hand, an armed group known as the Taleban Group has been added to the existing groups, and on the other, the Pakistani Government has apparently abandoned its past self-restraint and moderation and is impatiently and restlessly striving to have Kabul conquered by the Taleban forces. And the cost of all this is not very important to it. For example, the city can be bombed; houses can be destroyed; civilians can be wounded; and so on. Another dimension of the issue can be seen too—and that is the U.S. Government's fresh interest in the Afghan situation.

2. We should correctly understand the current situation. The first reason for the current situation is the great mistake that the Afghan jehadi forces committed after their great victory over the former Soviet empire by entering into a power struggle instead of being thankful for their victory and sitting next to each other, like brothers, and starting to rebuild heroic Afghanistan. The other reason is that we should not forget that there are many elements that do not want any signs of the heroic struggles of the Afghan nation against one of the greatest military powers of the century to exist in the future of oppressed Afghanistan! Therefore, the revival of people like Zaher Shah—although only as a facade!— can grant the enemies of the movement the opportunity to distort the religious jihad.

3. What should be done? Is there a logical solution? I think that the first and foremost duty of other countries—especially Pakistan and Iran—is not to allow an armed confrontation. In his historic message to the Afghan nation a few months ago, the esteemed leader underlined the impermissibility of any type of armed confrontation. We believe that none of the Afghan 'ulema considers the killing of innocent women and children in Kabul to be permissible! No one should include the use of force in his strategy. Our scholarly brothers in Afghanistan too should know that they are to blame for any bullet that is fired at Kabul or anywhere else for various reasons. One is that it is the lives of Muslims that are involved. The other is that they are Afghanis and, above all, they are "religious scholars."

4. Afghani brothers: You have disgraced Islam as much as possible. It is enough! Silence your guns. Do not allow the enemies of Islam to ridicule you. You have scored many achievements. You can and should direct Afghanistan toward peace and security, which are the prerequisites for rebuilding the country. Come and let us convince the millions of Muslims that the Islamic movement will always open up the path of peace and progress in front of the ummah.

Oil Minister, Turkmen Official Discuss Cooperation

*LD0912203595 Tehran IRIB Television Second
Program Network in Persian 1900 GMT 9 Dec 95*

[FBIS Translated Text] At a meeting between the vice president of Turkmenistan in charge of energy affairs and our country's oil minister, cooperation between the two countries with regard to building a pipeline for transferring Turkmen gas, the participation of the National Iranian Oil Company and the French oil company Technip in the construction of an oil refinery in Turkmenistan and the cooperation of the National Iranian Oil Company towards oil exploration in that country's territory were discussed.

The Iranian and Turkmen officials also discussed the idea of the formation of a trilateral consortium between the oil companies of Iran, Turkmenistan, and Russia for the exploration and excavation of oil on the Turkmen coastline on the Caspian Sea. They also stressed the resolve existing in Iran and Turkmenistan for the construction of a Turkmen gas pipeline through Iran.

Envoy Comments on Relations with Turkey

*LD1212142995 Tehran IRNA in English
1336 GMT 12 Dec 95*

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Ankara, Dec. 12, IRNA — Iran's ambassador to Ankara, Mohammad Reza Baqeri, said Iran and Turkey by expanding their cooperation in the Central Asia can meet all the needs of Central Asian countries and block the infiltration of the West into this region.

Talking to daily ZAMAN published in Istanbul today, Baqeri said the West is instigating rivalry between Iran and Turkey in the Central Asia to create a favorable atmosphere to spread its influence in that region.

The ambassador said Iran does not consider itself as a rival to Turkey in Central Asia and that Turkey has announced time and again that it does not see Iran as its rival in the Central Asia.

Baqeri refuted claims that Iran supports the Kurdish Workers' Party (PKK) of Turkey, saying Iran's soil is not a safe place for anti-Turkey activities.

He said Turkey, too, should not allow the terrorists opposed to Iran to use Turkish soil for propaganda campaign against the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Iran's ambassador to Turkey said certain Turkish newspapers carry biased reports about Iran, noting that discussion on security issues of the two countries should be made within the framework of the security cooperation committee.

Baqeri said the level of annual trade exchanges between Iran and Turkey rose from 250 million dollars in prerevolution period to 2.5 billion dollars annually during the Iraqi-imposed war and to 950 million dollars at the moment.

He said Iran is interested in expanding trade cooperation and non-oil exports with Turkey.

Transport Memo of Understanding Signed With Turkey

LD1212174095 Tehran IRIB Television First Program Network in Persian 1530 GMT 12 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] At the end of the three-day visit to Tehran by the Turkish Transport Minister, a memorandum of understanding was signed between the two countries.

According to a Central News Unit report the memorandum of understanding, which was signed in Tehran this afternoon by Messrs Torkan, our country's Roads and Transport Minister, and Oguz Tezman, the Turkish Transport Minister, includes an amendment to the international surface transport agreement; elimination of permit restrictions; creation of more facilities for trucks and buses of the other country; 60 percent discount on transport charges for export goods; 50 percent discount on transport charges for import goods; 40 percent discount on transport charges for transit goods through the two countries' railways.

The elimination of extra duties on air transport and agreement on raising the level of cooperation in communications and postal services are also included in the memorandum of understanding.

After signing, the agreement the Transport Minister said to our correspondent: From now on the four marine zones, the Persian Gulf, the Caspian Sea, the Mediterranean and the Black Sea, will be linked.

Indonesian Judiciary Official Pays Visit

Arrives, Comments on Human Rights

LD1112155595 Tehran IRNA in English 1529 GMT 11 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Dec. 11, IRNA — Indonesian Chief Justice H. Soerjono said upon his arrival in Tehran Monday [11 December] that human rights are much better observed in Islamic countries, especially in the Islamic Republic of Iran, than in western countries. Soerjono, who arrived here at the head of a high ranking judicial delegation told IRNA that analysis of western countries about the situation of human rights in Islamic countries were far from reality.

The Indonesian judicial official said his visit to Tehran was aimed at strengthening relations between Tehran and Jakarta in all fields and getting acquainted with Iran's judicial system.

He was received at the Tehran Airport by his Iranian counterpart, Ayatollah Mohammadi Gilani who said that during the stay of the Indonesian judicial delegation in Tehran the two sides will explore ways of promoting judicial relations between the two countries.

The Iranian chief justice said that during the talks with the Indonesian delegation views would be exchanged on judicial, legal, cultural issues and on exchange of jurists between the two countries.

Ayatollah Mohammadi Gilani added that the two sides are expected to ink an agreement for initiation of judicial cooperation between Iran and Indonesia.

Meets With Judiciary Head

LD1212120795 Tehran IRIB Television First Program Network in Persian 1030 GMT 12 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Mr. Soerjono, president of the Indonesian Supreme Court, who is visiting Iran at the head of a high-ranking judicial delegation, met this morning with Mr. Yazdi, the head of the judiciary. At the meeting, Mr. Yazdi said: Islam's jurisprudential sources provide the most comprehensive bases for the judicial systems of countries and it is our duty and the duty of other Islamic countries to strive to explain and elucidate the judicial principles of Islam to the world.

He added: The vital commands of Islam are currently being implemented in the Islamic Republic of Iran's judicial courts and we are not opposed to the world's legal principles so long as they do not infringe the judicial commands of Islam.

Describes Indonesia's Justice System

*LD1212172595 Tehran IRNA in English
1715 GMT 12 Dec 95*

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Dec. 12, IRNA — Head of the judiciary, Ayatollah Mohammad Yazdi, in his meeting here today with the chief justice of Indonesia H. Soerjono, said Islamic jurisprudence forms the most comprehensive source for the legal code of Muslim states.

He added that the Islamic states should cooperate with each other for studying the different aspects of Islamic jurisprudence in order to develop the judicature in the Muslim countries.

Yazdi briefed Soerjono on the Islamization of the judiciary in Iran following the victory of the Islamic revolution in 1979.

He said the capital punishment in most countries is meant to remove a corrupt element and thereby help preserve the health and security of the society from criminals.

Elaborating on the dynamism of the shari'ah', Ayatollah Yazdi said that on the world scene today, Islam has also shown its judicial presence in all fields.

Soerjono for his part briefed the Iranian judiciary chief on the justice system in Indonesia, and stressed the need for exchange of visits between judicial officials of the two countries so as to benefit mutually.

The Indonesian chief justice heading a ranking judicial delegation arrived in Tehran on Monday [11 December].

Addresses Observance of Human Rights

*LD1212203295 Tehran IRNA in English
1810 GMT 12 Dec 95*

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Dec. 12, IRNA — Minister of Justice, Hojjat ol-Eslam Esma'il Shushtari said here today that in Islamic Iran all people enjoy equal rights according to the letter and spirit of the law, and that religious minorities are free to practice their rites.

Shushtari, in his meeting with visiting Indonesian Chief Justice H. Soerjono, elaborated on the working of the justice system in the Islamic republic and said that if a religious minority forms the bulk of the population of a city, a judge from the same community is appointed to administer the lawcourt of that town.

He said that in Iran lawsuits are handled by three different courts: the public courts, the Islamic Revolution courts and the military courts.

According to Shushtari if an appeal was filed against a verdict, the court of apeal or the Supreme Court will examine the case and confirm or over rule the earlier verdict.

He said 300 public courts with 2,019 branches, 66 islamic revolution courts with 218 branches and 274 courts of appeal are working across the country.

Soerjono, who arrived here on Monday [11 December] at the head of a delegation, seemed impressed by the judicial system in Iran, and said: "As I have learned of the Iranian legal code, I understand that human rights are precisely observed in Iran and no one's rights is being violated."

He said the fact that the country has a court of appeal and a Supreme Court to examine the apeals lodged by those convicted, indicated that human rights are fully observed in the Islamic Republic of Iran.

The two sides called for exchange of views between Tehran and Jakarta on legal issues.

Meanwhile the head of the Supreme Court, Ayatollah Mohammadi Gilani who was present in the meeting briefed the Indonesian chief justice on the way the supreme court functions in Islamic Iran.

Meets Rafsanjani, Comments on Ties

*LD1212202995 Tehran IRNA in English
1918 GMT 12 Dec 95*

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Dec. 12, IRNA — President Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani said here on Tuesday [12 December] that the adopting of the Islamic law by the judicature of Iran was one of the salient features of the Islamic revolution and a major development in the judicial system.

In his meeting with the Indonesian Chief Justice, H. Soerjono, Hojjat ol-Eslam Rafsanjani pointed to the high level of political, economic and trade relations between Tehran and Jakarta and said the current visit would serve to boost judicial and legal cooperation between the two Islamic countries.

He said Indonesia with the largest Muslim population in the world and Iran as the rich and powerful state in the sensitive region of the Middle East, should further enhance the level of bilateral cooperation.

Soerjono said that his becoming familiar with the legal code in Islamic Iran has been the positive result of his visit.

He said it was a very useful experience for the Indonesian judicial delegation to see that the Islamic law has prevailed over the legal code in Iran.

Soerjono said Jakarta is interested in deepening relations with Tehran in all areas.

On Tuesday afternoon, the Indonesian chief justice met and exchanged views with his Iranian Prosecutor General, Ayatollah Morteza Moqtada'i on the functioning of the Islamic judicial system in Iran.

Moqtada'i said that in Iran religious minorities enjoy full rights and their cases in lawcourts are decided on the basis of their own personal laws.

He said that global arrogance because of its fears of the Islamic legal system in Iran, has accused Iran of violation of human rights.

The official said that if a just and impartial committee were to study human rights issues in Iran, it will become clear that no country attaches so great a respect to human rights as Islamic Iran.

He said that Iran and Indonesia share many thing in common regarding judicial issues, and the consolidation of the two countries' judicial ties, will have a positive impact on the Muslim world.

Soerjono, who arrived in Iran on Monday at the head of a high ranking delegation, said that his visit had afforded him an excellent opportunity to study Iran's Islamic judicial system from close, and he hoped that the experience would strengthen Tehran- Jakarta ties.

Earlier today, the Indonesian chief justice had held separate meetings with the Head of the Judiciary Ayatollah Mohammad Yazdi and the Minister of Justice Hojjat ol-Eslam Ismael Shushtari.

South African MP on Importance of Bilateral Ties

LD0912221395 Tehran IRNA in English
2113 GMT 9 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Dec. 9, IRNA — A South African parliamentarian, Fatimah Khajij, said here today that President Nelson Mandela believes that relations with the Islamic Republic of Iran are important for the country and that he will never allow any interference in this respect.

She made the statement in a meeting with Vice-Chairman of the Majles Foreign Policy Commission, Mohammad Javad Larijani.

Khajij, who is a member of the Foreign Policy Commission of the South African Parliament, stressed on expansion of cooperation between Iran and South Africa, and called for exchange of information between the parliaments of the two countries.

Larijani in reply referred to the unique role that South Africa plays in the African continent and called for promotion of relations between the two countries.

After the end of apartheid in South Africa, Iran re-established ties with South Africa which were severed after the victory of the Islamic revolution in 1979 as part of support for the then front-line states in southern Africa.

Relations between the two countries are improving in all areas with the opening of embassies and exchange of officials of the two countries.

Va'ezi Meets With Irish Foreign Ministry Official

LD1012192895 Tehran IRNA in English
1845 GMT 10 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Dec. 10, IRNA — In a meeting here today with the Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister for Euro-American Affairs Mahmud Va'ezi, the Visiting Irish Foreign Ministry Director General for Economic Affairs Neol Fahey expressed the need for further expansion of relations between Iran and his country.

Va'ezi calling as "friendly and traditional" the relations between Iran and Ireland, said grounds have been prepared for multilateral cooperation with Europe.

The Irish official arrived here on Saturday [9 December] at the head of a delegation for a two-day stay and talks with Iranian officials.

Oil Minister: No More Need To Refine Oil Abroad

LD1312122595 Tehran IRIB Television First Program Network in Persian 1030 GMT 13 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Foreign exchange revenue from oil exports in the country's budget for 1375 [21 March 1996-20 March 1997] has been estimated at a rate of $15.5 per barrel. According to Oil Minister Gholam Reza Aqazadeh-Kho'i, citing estimates by the Oil Ministry, the foreign currency revenue from the export of crude oil and oil products in 1375 will be $15.8 billion dollars.

The oil minister said: With the continuation of the energy-saving policy, the level of oil products next year will be less than that estimated in the five-year plan; and with the opening of Bandar Abbas's refinery in the year 1375, Iran's National Oil Company will no longer need to refine parts of its oil abroad and will become an exporter of oil products.

Television Shows Nation's First Tank-Carrier

LD1212121295 Tehran IRIB Television First Program Network in Persian 1030 GMT 12 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] We begin the second part of our domestic news with a report on the manufacture of a new tank-carrier by the Islamic Republic of Iran's ground forces.

For the first time in the country a tank-carrier, the Babr-400, has been built by the experts of the Self-sufficiency and Research Jihad unit of the Islamic Republic of Iran's ground forces. Brigadier-General Ma'sumzadeh is here to provide more details:

[Begin recording] [Ma'sumzadeh] This vehicle took about two years to design and build. All the work was carried out by the specialists, engineers, and technicians of the ground forces in the ground forces' industries. This vehicle has covered about 3,000 km in various parts of the country, thus passing its tests successfully.

[Unidentified correspondent] What advantages has this tank-carrier over its foreign counterparts?

[Ma'sumzadeh] This vehicle has been designed to suit our country's [?environmental] conditions so that it can easily cope with warm-weather and cold-weather conditions as well as with damp and dry weather conditions. It possesses four active axles and can easily drive over all obstacles and difficult terrain with its heavy load. [end recording]

Paper: No Reason for Holding Government Referendum

NC0812185895 Tehran SALAM in Persian 29 Nov 95 p 2

[From the SALAM's "Special Answer to a Telephone Call" Column]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [Unidentified caller] As was stated a few days ago in SALAM, our government is a popular one, that is, a government established by the votes of the people. This is how the government was and the majority agreed with it, but now what? Is it possible that once again a referendum on the government may be held?

[SALAM] The question asked by our esteemed listener is based on the premise that the performance of certain individuals, groups, and governments is identified with that of the system itself. If, for example, the people (in the majority or minority) did not agree with the government, the inference would be that they do not agree with the principle of the system, that is, the Islamic Republic of Iran.

We also discussed earlier that unfortunately some individuals or groups are disseminating propaganda about themselves in such a way as to project their individual or collective nature as one with the principle of the system. This gives the wrong impression that those who oppose these individuals or groups are considered opponents of the system itself.

Such propaganda or ideas are incorrect. The Islamic Republic of Iran has, for the first time, replaced a monarchical system. In the world today, virtually no intelligent person or mature nation would want a monarchy. Which Iranians—except for a handful of monarchists—would want us to revert to a monarchical system?

What have the shah, the monarchical regime, and the king's court brought the Iranian people except disgrace and destruction that they would now want the return of such a regime? The fact that our Republic should be an Islamic one is also a truism for how people who are Muslims and have a faith deeply-rooted in 15 centuries could even imagine a republic without Islam. Can one even contemplate that the people should be Muslim but would not agree with their government being Islamic? [passage omitted]

One should not have any doubts whatsoever that if a referendum were held today, the Iranian people would once again categorically endorse and support the Islamic Republic of Iran. However, there is no reason to hold such a referendum. Where in the world is a referendum held on the very principle of the system?

Yes. The real reason for generating such propaganda is the erroneous propaganda by some shallow-minded individuals and groups who are quick to accuse those who do not see eye to eye with them as being opposed to the system. Unfortunately, they are the ones who are supported by the sources of power. This enables them to act this way, which spreads such views. They raise such an outcry that no one dares to rebut their fabrications.

In today's world, those who rule on the basis of wisdom and experience act in such a manner that groups and governments may come and go but the basic principle of that system remains firmly intact and is not undermined by the criticism of individuals, groups, or governments. Neither is anyone corrupted or ostracized as a result of such criticism. May God safeguard this system from the evil of shortsighted opportunists.

SALAM Discusses Mingling of Religion, Politics

NC0812173595 Tehran SALAM in Persian 2 Dec 95 p 2

[SALAM's "Special Answer to a Telephone Call"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [Unidentified caller] For quite some time, you have been calling on all people to actively participate in the Majles and presidential elections. You believe that we will be able to elect reformist individuals to the Majles and as president who will solve all our problems. But you know yourself that there are certain limitations because one cannot choose just anyone and send him to the Majles, even if he is a devout Muslim. It is possible that most of the people may be Muslims but they may prefer socialism or liberalism. There are many clerics who do not believe it is necessary to let religion permeate politics. Someone who becomes a candidate has to go through various channels. With such a system only individuals with a distinctive way of thinking are elected.

[SALAM] In fact, we do not see any problem with the need for preliminary vetting as people are not generally aware of individuals' inner secrets. However, the government has access to a person's record through its judicial, security, and law enforcement bodies and can ban certain individuals from the election arena if they have a record of illegal actions.

The investigating teams do not have the right to deprive candidates from being nominated merely because of differing political views. Similarly, legislative officials do not have the right to incorporate any preconditions for candidacy into the law. [passage omitted]

Our esteemed reader said that some of the clerics do not consider it necessary for religion to permeate politics. There are some clerics who do not participate in political matters because of this view and do not propose themselves for candidacy to the Islamic Majles, so people cannot vote for them.

However, we do not know of any cleric who participates in political matters and is a deputy in the Majles but also believes that religion should not be connected with the approval of laws, that is, that laws which contravene the shari'ah can also be approved! The group of clerics which believes that religion should not be connected with politics believes that religion and religious people, that is the clerics, do not want to become contaminated by the world of politics and power and therefore they should not interfere in political matters.

The other group, which believes that religion should concern itself with political matters, states that religion should assume power so that it can implement its aspirations and should have a power base with Islam, Muslims, and Islamic countries so that it can defend itself against foreign aggression. We are not aware of any third school of thought on this.

Candidates Urged To Present Election Platforms

NC0712124895 Tehran TEHRAN TIMES in English 2 Dec 95 p 2

[Editorial: "5th Majles Candidates Should Enter Election Campaign on the Basis of Their Platforms"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The Islamic Revolution toppled the Pahlavi regime and dismantled its political apparatus with unbelievable speed. As a result, when the Islamic Republic was established we could not follow any trace the defunct Shah's political system.

Due to more than a half century of the masses, the systematic elimination of political parties and pressure groups and liquidation of opposition forces by the Pahlavi regime, the Iranian political scene faced temporary chaos in the aftermath of the victory of the Islamic Revolution.

The Iranian people basically do not trust political parties because of the parties' tainted records during the short period they were allowed to function in the Shah's time. In that period we had left-wing parties which advocated the interests of foreign powers by sacrificing national interests, and we had right-wing parties supporting the Shah's regime which was essentially a proxy of the United Sates.

In the aftermath of the victory of the Islamic Revolution numerous pressure groups mushroomed with alignment and adherence to one global power or another. This led to serious chaos in the country.

The Islamic Republican Party could not function because it was not an actual political party. Hence, in almost all elections had in the aftermath of the collapse of the Pahlavi regime, Iranian voters have become accustomed to casting their ballots in favor of candidates, not on the basis of their evaluation of the candidates's platforms, but on the basis of their assessment of each candidate's personal merits.

Although, thus far, this voting behavior has done good to the nation, it would not be an appropriate mechanism in the long-run. President Rafsanjani stressed that parties can play a crucial role in the country. It is not feasible to form political parties within the short time left before the elections. For the upcoming elections candidates must enter the campaign on the basis of their plans and present to the voters their election platforms.

If candidates present their platforms to voters, it will facilitate the elections of the best candidate and guarantee the accountability of the elected candidates to the voters. Through evaluating promises made in the platforms, voters can easily assess each candidate and see if they kept their promises.

Voters should cast their ballots for those candidates who have a well-designed plan for the nation. Hence, candidates should present their election platforms to the voters.

Majles Speaker on Elections, Importance of Duty

NC1212132995 Tehran KEYHAN in Persian 2 Dec 95 p 14

[Report from a KEYHAN correspondent in Bushehr]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] On the third day of his visit to Bushehr Province, Majles Speaker Hojjat ol-Eslam val Moslemin Nateq-Nuri attended a meeting of Bushehr University students and answered their questions on various topics. [passage omitted]

Answering a question by Hojjat ol-Eslam Nabavi, a former Bushehr deputy, on whether any changes have been made to the imam's historic decree on the apostate Salman Rushdie, he said: The decree stands. It is unchangeable. The leader of the revolution has pointed this out. But the government will not send a commando [preceding word in English] to carry out the job.

He said: The 15 Khordadn Foundation is not a governmental organization as such. But in line with its authorities it has offered a reward for carrying out the imam's decree.

Asked if he will stand as a presidential candidate and if his visit to the provinces is in line with this, the Majles speaker said:

Visits to the provinces are nothing new. I did not introduce them. Such visits were carried out before me by Karrubi, Hashemi- Rafsanjani, and Yazdi when they were the heads of the legislative branch.

These visits are ordinary visits, which each Majles speaker should make.

He said: Visiting the provinces helps us to learn the people's problems and to brief the people on national issues.

The Majles speaker said: I consider it unfair that some people want to sever our relations with the people for their own political gain.

Commenting on his candidacy for the presidency, he said: We have never sought any position. We have always been involved in struggles and in the revolution. We will never stop being involved. We are even prepared to sacrifice our lives for this. We are not disturbed by change. We never sought any rank. Our rank is assigned; serving in that position is our duty.

He said: I have never shunned responsibility and seek no rank or position. Even if my current position is taken from me, I will still be a scholar.

Asked if it is true that he and Bahonar are the decisionmakers in the Tehran Militant Clergy Association [TMCA], he said: In the TMCA there is only the clergy; the responsibility for political decisionmaking rests with Mo'ezzi, a clergyman. The man in charge of cultural decisions is Hojjat ol-Eslam val Moslemin Taqavi. I am in charge of the mass media. Once decisions are made, they are sent to the Central Council.

He clarified: No decisions have been made on the elections in Tehran.

He said that relations between the TMCA and other groups that support it are paternal: The TMCA is the father and the groups are the children. The relations are like those between father and child.

He stressed: If someone in the towns says he is a TMCA candidate, he is lying. The TMCA has not endorsed or supported anyone from the towns as a candidate for the fifth term.

Commenting on university discussions on Dr. Sorush, the head of the legislative branch said: We should not enter discussions concerning individuals. I am very much against discussing individuals and magnifying or downplaying them. I have stated this often.

Speaking about university students' political activities, the Majles speaker asked that they actively participate in political activities: If one day the seminaries or the universities abandon politics, they will become vulnerable.

He said: the United States imposed economic sanctions on us. But all it did was isolate itself. Even its closest allies and friends did not follow suit. The United States has even threatened to boycott companies. But we consider all this to be God's blessing on us.

Commenting on Iranian-British relations, he said: Our relations with Britain are on the diplomatic and commercial levels. Pointing out that since last year the government has repaid debts, thanks to good planning, he said: The Majles has set a specific ceiling on this and has allocated an amount. Now we have no pending issues. [passage omitted]

Majles Approves Bill on Electoral Constituencies

LD1312134195 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 1030 GMT 13 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] At today's open Majles session, the members' bill for amending the table [jadval] of electoral constituences, which had a single urgency, was approved. According to our correspondent, with the approval of this bill, there will be changes to the electoral constituencies of the Majles in the provinces of Zanjan, Yazd, Fars, Kerman, Esfahan, Mazandaran, Tehran, Hamadan, Lorestan, Gilan, and Kurdestan. Our correspondent reports:

[Unidentified correspondent] On this basis, the electoral constituency of Tehran includes the towns of Tehran, Rey, Shemiranat, and Eslamshahr; the district of Khomam has been separated from the electoral constituency of Bandar Anzali and made a part of the electoral constituency of the town of Rasht; and the electoral constituencies of Nur and Mahmudabad will include the town of Nur and all its districts and surrounding villages. In addition to this, the names of the electoral constituencies of Mahneshan will be changed to Manheshan, Anguran and (?Ijrud); Ardakan changes to Ardakan and Meybod; Sarvestan-Korbal to Sarvestan, Korbal, and Kavar; Abadeh to Abadeh and Bavanat; and Ahar to Ahar and Heriz.

This bill makes the Interior Ministry responsible for including the names of the towns and districts of electoral constituencies in the table of the names of electoral constituencies. The Interior Ministry is permitted — if the electoral constituency includes more than two names — to engrave all or parts of the names of the constituency on the seal. [passage omitted]

Money Spent on Propaganda Seen as 'Incorrect'

NC1012195795 Tehran SALAM in Persian 26 Nov 95 p 2

[From the column: "Special Answer to a Telephone Call"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Regarding the naming of days and weeks for special purposes, ultimately the year's 365 days will prove insufficient. Rather than spending money on posters and publicity for these days, this money could be spent to meet the needs of the people and solve the problems of the deprived masses, and especially the civil servants; I think thus that there would no longer be a need for so much propaganda and publicity, since serving the public is the best type of publicity.

[SALAM] This type of opinion on propaganda stems from the incorrect propaganda that has been going on for the past six to seven years on promises of welfare. The propaganda was directed at the public and purported that everything was prepared and would be distributed at the lowest prices to the people. It also professed that the rival faction was preventing the implementation of the welfare because it wanted the people to be poor. In this campaign, the public was urged to be tolerant. And during the Friday prayers they [those delivering the sermon] asked: How long should the people suffer the hardships of the revolution? It is time to enjoy the boons of the revolution, they said. They also said that apparently all the hardships were imposed on the people by the opposition. They also said that they will make a Switzerland out of Iran. The sermon also urged the people to not sit at home but to go to the forests and the coasts and live well, eat well, and dress well. They once again made such promises, as if during all the post-revolution and war years all that was needed was available for distribution, except that the rival faction was preventing the people from using God's blessings. They promised to solve all the problems, one after the other.

At any rate, this misguided propaganda has led the people who have been patiently sitting and waiting for welfare and waiting to see their country be transformed into a Switzerland to believe that even the necessary amount of propaganda is excessive and comment that the money spent on propaganda should be spent to meet the people's needs.

But the truth is that in view of the conditions after the victory of the revolution; the imposed eight-year war; the fact that much of our economic potential—both agricultural and industrial—was inactive; the lack of experience of the revolutionary forces; the fact that counterrevolutionary forces—from monarchist to Marxist and to the monafeqin [hypocrites—pejorative for the Mojahedin-e Khalq Organization—were active, the continuous efforts by the zealous and young forces could not have done more than they did. But undoubtedly, after the end of the war and in view of the priceless experience that was gained; the existence of all the counterrevolutionary elements (which was also the outcome of the past era); the fact that we did not have the heavy expenditures of the war any longer; the restarting of facilities that had been closed down, thus helping economic activities to flourish and the management force to mature, the achievements were much less than what society expected. And part of the shortages were the outcome of the incorrect propaganda that led the people to have expectations beyond economic reality, management capability, and the administrative structure of the country. And instead of doing what all other countries have done after a war—encourage the people to work more, spend less, and tighten their belts, they acted contrary to this.

If laudable acts have been carried out—and they have—they have not been done with our own resources; we have astronomic debts to the four corners of the world and have caused the rapid emergence of a class with fairy-tale wealth gained through astronomical embezzlement. The acts also caused the firm spirit of the revolutionary forces to be more vulnerable, led to doubt in the principle of the revolution and in its management, and has occasionally allowed others to use this pretext to spread doubt even in the elements of the revolution and in the principle of religion; and an opportunist group has been allowed to resort to aggression, degradation, and mud-slinging at one person or another under the mask of defending the values of the revolution for the sake of achieving restive power. Only this, and the dauntlessness and carelessness about the future of the revolution and its judgment by future generations and... [ellipses as published]

Pakistan

Spokesman Criticizes U.S. State Department Remarks

BK1312025295 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in Urdu 0200 GMT 13 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] The government will continue the antiterrorism steps to normalize the situation in Karachi. A Foreign Office spokesman said in Islamabad yesterday that the government sincerely feels that political issues should be resolved peacefully through negotiations. However, it will not compromise on its stance on terrorism.

The spokesman termed the U.S. State Department's comment on the Karachi situation as an interference in Pakistan's internal affairs and contravention of the principles of relations between friendly countries. Commenting on the statement, the spokesman said that it is due to the stern steps taken by the government that the acts of violence by terrorists are being overcome in Karachi.

Khan Alleges 'Foreign Hand' Behind Karachi Events

BK1212120595 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in English 1100 GMT 12 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The minister for law, Mr. N.D. Khan, told the National Assembly that despite attempts by antinational elements, there has been an overall improvement in the law and order situation in Karachi. He was speaking on a call-attention notice by Mr. Muzaffar Ahmad Hashmi, Ijaz Ahmad Shafi, and Raja Mohammad Afzal. He said some incidents of the past few days are a clear proof that a foreign hand and Mafia were active. He said despite tension in the city today, the situation is under control. The government is checking the arms supply to the terrorists to curb their activities.

Speaking on a point of order by Mr. Gazanfar Gul about the registration of an FIR [First Information Report] against senior functionaries of the government in the murder of [Muhajir Qaumi Movement Chief] Altaf Hussain's brother and nephew, the minister of state for law and justice, Mian Raza Rabbani, said the record and the sequence of events show that the complaint made was based on malefide intentions and that it might have been motivated to defame the state and the government.

Dailies Warned Against Sensationalizing Violence

BK1212163595 Hong Kong AFP in English 1620 GMT 12 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] KARACHI, Dec 12 (AFP) — The Pakistani authorities have threatened action against five evening newspapers in Karachi, alleging they published sensational reports on incidents in the strife-torn city.

Notices under the Pakistan Penal Code have been served on the editors of Public, Qaumi Akhbar, Awam and Paracham, all published in Urdu language, and the editor of English language Star daily, the Karachi Union of Journalists (KUJ) said.

The code provides a penalty of upto seven years for publishing rumours or reports likely to cause fear or disturbance to public peace.

KUJ president, Azhar Abbas, said the notices did not mention specific charges.

"It is in continuation of Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto's target to the press. They have not mentioned the cases and we think it is victimisation," Mazhar Abbas, Karachi journalists' union president, told AFP.

Officials said the evening newspapers were playing a "bad role" in the current situation in Karachi.

Bhutto has previously criticised newspapers for publishing what she called "lies" about her government and its policies as well as reports maligning her husband Asif Ali Zardari.

On June 30, the Sindh provincial government imposed a 60-day ban on six Urdu newspapers for alleged sensationalism, but the ban was lifted after four days following protests by newspapers and journalists' unions.

Political, ethnic and religious violence has so far claimed more than 1, 700 lives in Karachi this year.

'Broad-Based Government' Proposed as Afghan Solution

BK1212170895 Hong Kong AFP in English 1652 GMT 12 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] ISLAMABAD, Dec 12 (AFP) — Pakistan and Iran Tuesday called for the establishment of a broad-based government in Afghanistan after talks between senior officials of the two countries here.

Officials said visiting Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister 'Ala'eddin Borujerdi met with Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto and also held "in-depth" discussions with Pakistani Foreign Secretary Najmuddin Sheikh on the Afghan issue.

Borujerdi conveyed to Bhutto a message from Iranian President 'Ali Akbar Hashemi-Rajsanjani. The contents of the message were not disclosed.

The Iranian official later told a news conference he was satisfied with the talks, which were aimed at boosting mutual "coordination" in promoting a settlement to the Afghan conflict through negotiations among Afghan groups.

Borujerdi said Iran believed that peace could be restored in Afghanistan through the formation of a broad-based government representing all sections of society in that country.

A Pakistani official statement after the talks said the two sides emphasized the "necessity of the establishment of a broad-based government reflecting the ethnic and demographic realities in Afghanistan."

They also "reaffirmed their commitment to the preservation of the terratorial integrity of Afghanistan" and non-interference in its internal affairs, the statement said.

Borujerdi's talks here were part of the "understanding" for regular consultations which was reached between Bhutto and Rafsanjani during the Pakistani leader's visit to Tehran in November, it added.

The Iranian official said the Taleban Islamic movement — which has been beseiging Kabul with the avowed goal of ousting the administration of Afghan President Borhanoddin Rabbani — should play a "constructive role."

The Kabul government was ready to concede "some share" to the Taleban in the future setup, said Borujerdi, who recently had talks with Rabbani and his military strongman Ahmad Shah Mas'ud in the Afghan capital. He said the Iranian officials had been maintaining contacts with the Taleban.

Borujerdi said the Afghan people had seen enough of bloodshed, adding that they did not want "more bullets" and hostilities.

He said Iran had no specific proposal or a plan, stressing that a solution would have to come from Afghans themselves without any "outside" interference or any attempt to impose any format.

About a possible role for Rome-based former Afghan King Zaher Shah, he said the Afghan Jehadi parties, which defeated the 1979-89 Soviet military occupation of Afghanistan, stood for an Islamic system. "It will be quite natural to respect their views," he added.

Borujerdi defended Rabbani government's legitimacy, noting that it had been representing Afghanistan at international forums, including the Organization of the Islamic Conference.

He avoided giving a direct answer to questions whether differences over the legitimacy issue with Pakistan had been narrowed.

Islamabad believes the government's legitimacy has run out after the expiry of Rabbani's term in December last year.

Bhutto on Cooperation With Iran on Afghanistan

LD1212114095 Tehran IRIB Television First Program Network in Persian 1030 GMT 12 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] The latest developments in Afghanistan were discussed at today's meeting between Mr. ['Ala'eddin] Borujerdi, deputy foreign minister for the affairs of Asia and the Pacific, with Pakistan's Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto. According to the Central News Unit from Islamabad, our country's deputy foreign minister, at the meeting, stressed that the Islamic Republic of Iran strongly opposes the current clashes in Afghanistan. He added: The continuation of war in that country is against the interests of peace and stability in the region and the people of Afghanistan.

The prime minister of Pakistan, for her part, pointed to her country's interest in the restoration of peace and stability in Afghanistan. She said: The Afghan jihadi groups believe that Islamabad respects their efforts to solve their country's problem.

She said that Pakistan is prepared to cooperate with the Islamic Republic of Iran and help solve Afghanistan's present problems. She added: Pakistan believes that this cooperation is useful in that it will reduce the difficulties.

Iranian Minister Meets With Bhutto on Afghanistan

BK1212144895 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in English 1400 GMT 12 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The deputy Iranian foreign minister, Mr. 'Ala'eddin Borujerdi, called on Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto in Islamabad today and conveyed a message from the Iranian president.

Mr. Borujerdi also called on the foreign secretary, Mr. Najmuddin Sheikh, and other senior officials and discussed bilateral issues and situation in Afghanistan. The two sides underlined the need for a peaceful resolution of Afghan crisis. It was also agreed that a solution of the Afghan problem has to emerge from the Afghans themselves. Pakistan and Iran would continue to extend support and cooperation to the peaceful solution of the problem. Both sides also reaffirmed their commitment to the preservation of territorial integrity of Afghanistan and noninterference in Afghanistan's internal affairs. They emphasized the need of establishment of a broad-based government, reflecting the ethnic and demographic realities in Afghanistan.

Comments on Afghan Conflict

BK1312040595 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in English 0300 GMT 13 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The Iranian deputy foreign minister, Mr. 'Ala'eddin Borujerdi, has underlined the need for continuing consultations between Pakistan and Iran to help find a peaceful and negotiated settlement of the Afghan conflict. Talking to newsmen in Islamabad yesterday, he said that he was satisfied with his talks with Pakistani officials. He said Pakistan and Iran should make efforts for bringing rapprochement among the warring groups in that country.

A Foreign Office spokesman has said that the setting up of office in Jalalabad [in Afghanistan] by Pakistan's ambassador is not a political gesture but a functional visit to Afghanistan because we need to go and assess situation there. He said it is not understood why the Kabul government should criticize this.

Replying to a question about Iran's perception of the Afghan situation, the spokesman said that they are satisfied with the contacts between the two countries on the situation, which are being held in the spirit of prime minister's recent visit to Iran.

Reopening Mission 'Likely' To Strain Afghan Ties

BK1012141995 Islamabad THE MUSLIM in English 10 Dec 95 p 12

[Report by Muhannad Ali Imran]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Peshawar, Dec 9 — Relations between Pakistan and Afghanistan, which had considerably deteriorated after the armed attack on the Pakistan Embassy in Kabul a few months back, are likely to further strain following reports that Islamabad has decided in principle to re-open its mission in Jalalabad.

While the Pakistan government's decision of establishing its embassy in the Nangarhar capital has attracted warm welcome by almost all the groups, opposed to President Rabbani, the Kabul regime was yet to come out with its response.

An Afghan government official, however, disclosed that the ruling coalition in Kabul was well aware of the spoiled relations between the two sides. The Afghan government, it said, was likely to send a delegation to Islamabad to discuss the prevailing tension between the two governments.

Different Afghan diplomats working in Peshawar were said to be in continuous touch with the authorities in Kabul and some of them, the well-wishers of the two sides, were really endeavouring to bring the two governments closer to each other.

According to reports, some of the Afghan government officials working in different missions based in Pakistan, too were of the opinion that the Kabul government should take Islamabad into confidence on the issue of burning of its embassy in the Afghan capital and the tense situation arising out of it. There were reports that the Afghan government was being persuaded by its officials, working in Pakistan, for improving relations with Islamabad. They have also proposed their high-ups in Kabul to send a delegation to Islamabad or else invite a team from Pakistan so that a basis could be laid for removing the irritants involved between the two sides.

Meanwhile, various Afghan groups, opposed to President Rabbani, have welcomed the decision by the Pakistan government to re-open its embassy in Jalalabad.

Spokesman of Hezb-e Eslami in Peshawar, Ustaad Qareebur Rehman Saeed [name as published] said that the reopening of the Pakistan Embassy in Jalalabad was a right decision and it would definitely help in bringing nations of the two brotherly countries closer to each other.

He observed that after a pre-planned armed attack on Pakistan Embassy in Kabul, there was a dire need of shifting the mission to some safer place. He said that the attack on Pakistan Embassy was sponsored by Rabbani-Mas'ud duo in a bid to please their foreign masters, India and Russia.

Afghan political observers here believe that the reopening of the Pak Embassy in Jalalabad was likely to further spoil relations between the two countries.

Spokesman Refutes Report on UN Envoy's Expulsion

BK1312041095 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in English 0300 GMT 13 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Pakistan has categorically contradicted a news item that it had expelled a UN official and his wife on charges of espionage. A Foreign Office spokesman described the news item as totally baseless. He said the Government of Pakistan holds the mandate and the professional competence of the United Nations Observers Group for Pakistan and India in high esteem.

Alleged Mastermind of Coup Plot Interviewed

BK0812162495 Karachi TAKBEER in Urdu 23 Nov 95 pp 26, 27

["Exclusive" interview with Major Amin Minhas, chief of Tehrik-i-Fahmul Koran, by TAKBEER correspondent Javed Iqbal Khwaja and IMPACT INTERNATIONAL editor Hashir Farooqi in London; date not given]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Javed Iqbal Khwaja] When reports about the arrest of army officers and allegations about their plot to stage a violent Islamic revolution in Pakistan became public, the international media flashed the name of Major, retired, Amin Minhas as the mastermind of that planned insurrection. Maj. Minhas was not in Pakistan on the occasion of the arrest of the army officers. He has been living in London since early August because a case under the Public Maintenance Ordinance, M.P.O, 1960 had been filed against him in Pakistan on charges of inciting people against the country's government and Constitution.

When I approached him for an interview to learn the background of the entire story and his views about his role in this incident, he, as is his wont, happily agreed to grant me an interview. I, along with Hashir Farooqi, editor of IMPACT INTERNATIONAL, London, held a long question-and-answer session with Maj. Minhas, during which he answered questions on the real reasons for the arrest of the army officers, its background, his views on this development, his Tehrik-i-Fahmul Koran [Movement for Propagating the Teachings of Koran], and the current situation in Pakistan. Following are the selected excerpts of his interview:

[TAKBEER] The arrest of army officers in Pakistan and the allegations against them, that they were plotting to stage a coup and bring about a bloody Islamic revolution in the country, are very serious matters. Would you please shed light on this development on the basis of your information in this regard?

[Minhas] About the arrest of the army officers I can only say what I can guess. Whatever was done by those officers was not in any way a plot to bring about a revolution. It could only have been an effort to help the Kashmiri people, because I think that not helping the Kashmiris at this moment is the worst kind of treachery against the country and the nation. The Kashmiri mojahedin should be given assistance in every way possible and at all costs, but the present government's policy and efforts are to totally cut all supply lines to the mojahedin. Obviously, seeing this, the army officers would have tried to help the Kashmiris on their own. These officers are men of faith and honorable persons. The present situation is that not even a rifle is being allowed to cross the border; thus a criminal attempt is being made to sabotage the mojahedin's entire struggle. The officers have only tried to salvage the struggle and, on this pretext, the stories about a rebellion and the staging of an Islamic revolution have been concocted only to eliminate the Islamic elements from the Army.

Is it not preposterous that a brigadier who is the commander of a brigade will try to smuggle in 20 rifles? He cannot topple the government with 20 rifles. What kind of a rebellion was it in which a general and several other officers were involved, but they could not even rouse an Army division? Revolutions are not brought about in this manner.

The present political leadership, on one hand, claims to be supporting the Kashmiris; on the other, it is making it difficult for the Kashmiri mojahedin even to breathe under U.S. pressure. This entire coup story is a part of that policy and nothing else. The real objective of this policy is to eliminate from every organization the people who are the symbols of that organization's Islamic identity. The reports about the rebellion and the planned staging of an Islamic revolution are nothing but a part of a disinformation campaign designed to facilitate the dismissal of the aforementioned officers from the Army.

[TAKBEER] Your name has been cited in the international, especially British, media as the mastermind of this entire plot. It is also being said that your departure from the country and the arrest of the army officers are deeply interrelated. What do you say about that?

[Minhas] The first thing is that it is totally incorrect to say that I had hatched any such plot in collusion with the concerned officers, particularly Maj. General Abbasi, or that Abbasi has been attending my Koran teaching classes. These officers have not been members of my group, nor have I been in direct contact with them at any time. Of course, I know these officers personally and have become acquainted with many people through my Koran teaching sessions. I might have given them cassettes of Koranic lessons, but to say that I incited them to stage a revolution is totally incorrect.

The people who are aware of my ideology know fully well that I have devoted my life solely to having the Koran and the traditions of the holy prophet made the supreme law of the land. Now, if two or three generals want to do something in the name of Islam, then I will call it a rebellion because, even if they bring about a change, I will not recognize it as a change if those persons have not been given correct training and if they are not ready to make the Koran and the traditions of the holy prophet the supreme law. This is more so when I do not even believe that any such plot was being considered by the arrested officers. The unfortunate thing is that the present political leadership is bent upon destroying Islamic ideology. I am against all forms of violence. This is not my philosophy. My philosophy lies in the Koran and the traditions of the holy prophet, and I have always spoken and will continue to speak in its favor.

[TAKBEER] How deep is the influence of your message in the Army?

[Minhas] As far as I am concerned, I have approached numerous people in connection with my Koranic message. I met with generals and gave them the cassettes of my Koranic teachings. I had given one of my cassettes to Gen. Nasir when he was the chief of the Inter Service Intelligence. I have been in contact with many other generals and officers in connection with my Koranic message. I have given and also sent my journal and handbills to them. I have even been sending my monthly journal DAWAT-i-FIKR [Call to Reason] to Benazir Bhutto. I have knocked on all doors to have the Koran made the supreme law of the land. This is my mission. I give my message in my Friday prayer sermons, where a majority of the bureaucrats come to offer their prayers. So, obviously, my message must have some influence on them. Accusing me of inciting army officers into staging a rebellion is an attempt directed toward eliminating that influence.

[TAKBEER] Why and under what circumstances were you forced to leave Pakistan?

[Minhas] A major conspiracy was hatched to trap me. My views are not hidden from anyone. I say everything openly, but my mode of action and principles of life have never been to propagate violence in any form. I believe that a revolution brought about through any form of violence cannot succeed. I am the follower of the way in which our illustrious master Prophet Muhammad brought about the revolution — a revolution in which changes are brought about in the society by winning the hearts of the people and by giving them proper training.

I have been giving Friday sermons in the Motamar al-Alam al-Islami Mosque in Islamabad for the past 11 years. In my speeches, I have always emphasized that so long as the supremacy of the Koran and the traditions of the holy prophet is not recognized in the Constitution and they are not made the supreme law, I will continue to oppose this Constitution. I have offered to be hanged on the parliament doors as punishment for this crime, and it should be announced that the government does not recognize the Koran and the traditions of the holy prophet as the supreme law.

On the basis of one of my speeches, a case has been filed against me under Section 154 of the Public Maintenance Ordinance, under which the accused cannot obtain bail and can be held under detention for three months without any trial. One of my sympathizers informed me of this case, and I flew to London. Some new members of my organization, Tehrik-i-Fahmul Koran, whose training is still incomplete, said that they would protest the action against me, but I prevented them from doing so under the clearly defined policy of my organization.

The government knows that my organization is very small, and my work is to build a person's character. I do not even believe in elections, power, slogans, meetings, and rallies, let alone violence. The government, under a predetermined plan, wants to eliminate my influence — which is increasing as a result of my movement and my Koranic teachings — by associating me with terrorists and accusing me of inciting violence.

The Benazir government has staged this entire drama merely to convince the world — by giving it this present [the arrest of the army officers] on the UN's 50th anniversary — that there is no greater moderate leader than her and that those working in the name of Islam are terrorists and that she is doing everything possible to control them. All these allegations that the army officers were trying to bring about an Islamic revolution, or that I incited them to do so, have been fabricated by the government and are a part of the government's aforementioned policy.

[TAKBEER] It is being stressed, however, that you were deeply involved in this incident. After all, there must be some reasons behind this?

[Minhas] My only association with the people involved in this incident has been that I had given them my cassettes and journals. They are pointing the finger at me, but the fact is that I had openly asked the Army to play its role. There is nothing secret about it. My handbills are printed. I was compelled to make this appeal after watching what was happening in our country; our institutions are being gradually destroyed, and bribery and corruption are so rampant that even the president was compelled to admit that "police stations are sold not only in Karachi but in the entire country." I had only asked the military leadership to do whatever it can to save the situation. After all, it was this military leadership that played its role in removing a political leader — Nawaz Sharif — from power, bringing Moin Qureshi into the country, holding elections, and in helping to establish Benazir Bhutto's government. The same leadership should use its influence to reform the situation in the country.

[TAKBEER] Does it mean that you favor a military coup?

[Minhas] Look, the president and the prime minister themselves admit that corruption is rampant in the country, but they are still adhering to power. This means that the political leadership has failed miserably. Now, there are only two institutions left — the judiciary and the Army — that can salvage the situation. Since the judiciary has been destroyed in a systematic manner, there is no evidence of any justice in this country; the Army is the only institution left toward which the people can turn.

Yes, I ask the military leadership to do its duty. First, it should eliminate corruption from the country. The military leadership cannot say that it has nothing to do with the present state of affairs. It cannot ignore the situation. Our biggest problem, which has been eating into society like weevils, is corruption. The Army should help to eliminate corruption and initiate a series of question-and-answer sessions at all levels in the armed forces, in which the low-ranking leadership should ask the high-ranking leadership about what is happening in the country now.

The example of the incidents in the northern areas is before you. Sufi Mohammad has done the right thing in launching a movement for the enforcement of the Islamic law there. I admit he committed the mistake of launching the movement single-handedly, without consulting other leaders, but whatever was done by the Army to crush the movement was not appropriate. The military should now establish a process of accountability within its ranks. They should be asked why the movement launched by Sufi Mohammad was crushed with cannons and tanks. After all, he was spearheading a movement only for the enforcement of Islamic law. He was not leading an army of infidels.

[TAKBEER] What would you say about the Kashmir situation?

[Minhas] It is the responsibility of our armed forces to liberate Kashmir, and they should fulfill this duty at all costs. The Benazir government, on one hand, makes tall claims about supporting the Kashmiris; on the other hand, it is doing things that will break the back of the Kashmiri mojahedin's struggle. The current situation is that you can roam around in the country carrying weapons in your hands, but not even a single bullet is being allowed to be sent across the border. The Army should not take sides in this situation, otherwise the Kashmir freedom movement will breathe its last.

[TAKBEER] In your conversation, you have expressed grave disenchantment with the political parties, especially the religious parties. How will a change be brought about in the country?

[Minhas] Thus far, neither the Islamic Solidarity Council, the religious parties, nor the Islamic preachers and scholars have been able to come up with a policy that could make the people accept them as a force capable of providing an alternative leadership. These parties can never assume power simply by contesting elections and raising slogans for the enforcement of the Islamic system. In Pakistan, elections are contested on the basis of lies, deception, and false promises, and no other party can beat the present political leadership in using these tactics. State force and machinery will be used whenever elections are held. There will be horse-trading and vote buying and, obviously, the ruling party will use these tactics with full force.

Tell me, where is the chance for religious parties in this situation? How can they win elections when they have not been able to muster popular support? The sole solution to Pakistan's problems lies in mobilizing popular support for the call to make the Koran and the traditions of the holy prophet the supreme law of the land and to ensure the enforcement of this supreme law. Darkening the future of our entire nation has been: the manner in which our institutions have been destroyed; the obscenity, nudity, corruption, and price increases that have gripped the entire nation; the way the judiciary has become ineffective and helpless; and the current administration's breaking of all records of looting and exploitation. Our difficulties will continue to increase as long as the entire nation does not vow collectively to sin no more and the rule and authority of Allah is not established. I am extremely disappointed with the current political leadership, and I believe that nothing good will be done for the country as long as this leadership remains in power. The religious parties now have to think about how they can play their role under these circumstances.

Sri Lanka

President's Remarks on Security, Policies Reported

BK1212122395 Colombo Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation International Service in English 1045 GMT 12 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] President Chandrika Kumaratunga has explained to representatives of Tamil parties the measures taken to dispatch adequate food supplies and other essential items to displaced persons. She said this when the representatives brought to her notice several problems relating to the living conditions of the daily requirements of the displaced persons.

They met the president at Temple Trees yesterday. The question of the arrest of Tamil persons in Colombo was discussed in detail. The president while emphasizing the need for security to be maintained at a high level at this time, indicated to the delegation the detailed instruction issued to the police with regard to the procedures that should be adopted in all cases where persons are taken into custody for the purpose of interrogation and the president mentioned several occasions during which she personally took action with regard to complaints made to her. She called upon the representatives to bring to her notice promptly all allegations of degrading treatment and promised that necessary action will be taken without delay.

The issue of swift implementation of the government's language policy was also discussed. President Kumaratunga indicated the action taken by the government in this sector, including the initiative adopted by the cabinet to recruit teachers to provide classes in the Tamil language for Sinhalese students and vice versa. She informed that the government had also taken action on a priority basis to increase the number of translators available in several government departments.

The delegation stressed the need to refrain from hurting the susceptibilities of the Tamil people in the aftermath of the recent military operations in the North. She unreservedly endorsed this point of view and spelt out the measures taken by the government to prevent any affront being caused to the Tamil speaking people. Military action was solely directed against the LTTE [Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam]. The president reiterated that the government had distinguished clearly at all times between the Tamil people on one hand and the LTTE on the other. She also reiterated the government's commitment to adjust a lasting political settlement of the ethnic question. The devolution proposals in legal form will be presented to the Select Committee of Parliament soon. President Kumaratunga also told the representatives that she would greatly appreciate their assistance with regard to the resettlement of displaced persons in and around Jaffna and in gaining their support for the political proposals once they are placed before the Select Committee.

Representatives of parties present expressed their willingness to do so when the proposals were placed before the parliamentary Select Committee. The leaders of Tamil political parties thanked the president for granting an opportunity to make representations on behalf of the Tamil people. They expressed appreciation of the patient and the considerable hearing giving to them.

Ministers Professor G.L. Peiris, Lakshman Kadirgamar, Managala Samaraweera, and S. Thondaman were associated with the president at the discussion.

Measures Planned To Reconstruct 'Liberated Areas'

BK0912113395 Colombo LANKAPUVATH in English 1031 GMT 9 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Colombo, 9 Dec (LANKAPUVATH) — Measures are being taken to rehabilitate and reconstruct liberated areas in northern Sri Lanka.

The Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation in its afternoon news bulletin Saturday [9 December], said government officials will visit these areas to undertake this task.

They will include representatives from health, education, highways and food sectors.

This was disclosed by minister for housing, construction and public utilities, Nimal Siripala de Silva who heads the northern rehabilitation task force.

He said Japan and European countries were willing to help reconstruction work.

Preliminary measures have been taken to meet the basic requirements of the people in the north. Food, clothing and medicine have already been dispatched to these areas.

Building materials will be given free of charge to reconstruct destroyed buildings.

The minister said temporary identity cards will be issued to all those persons who are above 10 years of age.

LTTE Said To 'Forcibly' Recruit Youths

BK1212123195 Colombo Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation International Service in English 1045 GMT 12 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Reports reaching from Jaffna disclose that calls made by the LTTE [Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam] for the youths to join the organization are being rejected by them. As a result, the LTTE has begun to forcibly recruit the youths who are even below 14 years of age. The LTTE is also preventing parents from taking their children to Vavuniya and to overcome this situation. However, some who had already arrived in Vavuniya said that the LTTE was forcibly deploying their children for the battle.

LTTE leaders who addressed Jaffna University students several months before the launching of Operation Riviresa [sunshine] had requested them to join their organization and work for their welfare. It had even promised a monthly allowance for the work. However, there is information that the students did not appreciate this move. This clearly indicates the false propaganda launched by the terrorists internationally that the entire Jaffna population was with the organization.

UNICEF Says LTTE 'Indoctrinating' Children

BK1212124995 Colombo Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation International Service in English 1045 GMT 12 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] UNICEF has accused the LTTE [Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam] of indoctrinating school children.

In a special report to mark the beginning of its 50th year, UNICEF said that the Tigers are particularly active in infiltrating the school system and influencing young people with their propaganda.

The report entitled the State of the World During 1996, details among other things the problem of [word indistinct] growth the world over recruiting children to fight them. A special chapter on Sri Lanka discusses the UNICEF program called Education for Conflict Resolution which is being implemented in collaboration with the government. The program focuses on conflict resolution techniques which are best suited to Sri Lanka's culture. Among the methods used is mediation which is common to both Buddhism and Hinduism. UNICEF says that this education scheme is an attempt to ease the mental suffering caused by years of armed conflict.

The report in its chapter on South Asia has commended Sri Lanka's child immunization program. The immunization rate in the region has almost tripled to 85 percent this decade. However, strong disparity still exists. A child born in Sri Lanka can expect to live up to 72 years as against only 50 years in Bhutan.

LTTE 'Press Release' Describes Situation 9 Dec

BK1212130395 (Internet) soc.culture.sri-lanka in English 10 Dec 95

["Press release" issued by the LTTE Political Committee at "LTTE Headquarters" on 9 December]

[FBIS Transcribed Text]

Kilinochchi citizens appeal to the UN

The Citizens Committee of Kilinochchi has written to the Secretary General of the UN Butrus Butrus-Ghali requesting his intervention regarding the ban on travel in the Kilali lagoon. The Government has announced another army action. The people of the Thenmaradchy, Vadamaradchy districts in order to escape the artillery shells and aerial bombs have to seek shelter in the Vanni mainland. The only path open is the Jaffna lagoon. The government has banned any form of travel on these waters. The appeal requests the Secretary General to use his good offices and intervene on behalf of the helpless Tamil people and cause the ban to be lifted. On the 29th of November the Sri Lankan navy attacked passenger boats on the lagoon and lives were lost. In order to avoid a repeat of this, the ban should be lifted emphasise the letter to the UN Secretary General.

Crowd collect in Kilali embarkation point

During the last 3 days a record number of passengers crossed the Jaffna lagoon towards the Vanni mainland. Boats operate both by day and night and the delay is not too long. Roads and path leading to Killali are full of people of all ages seeking a new home in the Vanni. Vanni is the promised land in the vision of many people. Vehicles like push cycles, motor cycles and small cars are also being transported by boat. The tradition ingenuity of the Tamil people is utilised for taking these items across. Traders and business men are also transporting their wares to the mainland. Already business establishments of the Valigamam districts have sprung up in the Vanni overnight. Law and order is maintained by the Tamil Eelam police force in the three mile long Kilali sea shore.

Invasion of Jaffna a barbaric act, states letter to the UN

Swami Siddharupa Anantha, the Chief incumbent of the Point Pedro Sri Saratha Ramakrishna Ashram has address a long letter to the Secretary General of the UN. He has pointed out that the invasion of Jaffna by the Sri

Lankan armed forces is an uncivilised barbaric act. The invasion is a historical blunder that could worsen inter-racial relations the Swami points out. Tracing the history of the Tamil-Sinhalese conflict the Swami says that the politicians deceived their own people for selfish reasons and caused untold hardships to Tamils and Sinhalese alike. The worst type of Tamil politicians are still in Colombo says the Swami. The armed conflict came to the forefront with the mass-killing of Tamils in 1983. The intervention of India was unhappy occurrence. They had fallen into the trap laid by J.R. Jeyawardene, the erstwhile President and were bent on killing as many Tamils as possible. The Swami invites UN mediation to solve the present crisis in the island.

Two leading private hospitals of Jaffna open in the Vanni

The William Harvey memorial hospital of Chundikuli, Jaffna and the Holy Cross hospital of Passaiyoor, Jaffna have started service in Kilinochi and Mankulam respectively. These hospitals have full surgical facilities coupled with a consultative practice offered by specialists. The permanent residents of the Vanni mainland had to go to Colombo or Anuradhapura for treatment. Now due to these two hospitals both new and old citizens of the Vanni can get treatment in their own area. More hospitals are likely to follow in the near future.

[Signed] Political Committee, Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam [LTTE]

(English translation of the LTTE statement released by LTTE international secretariat, 211 Katherine Road, London E6 1BU, United Kingdom, Tel/Fax: 0181-470 8593.)

Report Views Devolution Package, Peace Talks

BK1112071295 Colombo DAILY NEWS in English 9 Dec 95

[Report by Pramod de Silva — received via Internet]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The government will talk peace with the LTTE [Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam] only if it accepts the devolution package granting greater autonomy to Tamil-dominated areas and agrees to a substantial surrender of arms, President Chandrika Kumaratunga said Friday [8 December].

"We are willing to talk to the Tigers as we are willing to talk to all other Tamil parties. But they should accept the package and agree to a substantial surrender of arms. Our experience is that they have never been sincere about peace," she told a special news conference at the Presidential Secretariat.

President Kumaratunga said there had been no official response yet to the government's amnesty offer from the LTTE as an organisation. But individuals continue to respond.

"We do not want to eliminate any group as long as they fall in line with us. But if they don't, we have no option."

Q: Are you going to ban the LTTE?

A: That is irrelevant at this moment.

She said the government's immediate priority in the aftermath of Operation Riviresa was rehabilitating Jaffna and facilitating the resettlement of civilians. The establishment of civil administration in Jaffna is an essential task. "Then we will see what happens and go ahead with the devolution package."

She stressed that the government had never wavered in its commitment to the devolution package and a political solution. However, it has been compelled to start a military campaign against forces which obstruct the course of peace.

Answering a question raised by a journalist on a definite date for bringing the devolution package before Parliament, she said: "We are looking at that seriously. There are no problems with the package and we will do what we set out to do."

She dismissed suggestions that the Cabinet was divided on certain issues including the political package. All ministers were fully supportive of the government's three-pronged approach to the national crisis vis a vis the military drive, the political package and economic development/rehabilitation.

"One must not think that the devolution package is the only component of a political approach. It is a much wider process. International relations, ethnic integration, the Sudu Nelum Movement, seminars and workshops on the package and a constant dialogue with all segments of the population are all part of it. We have to do a lot," the President told newsmen.

Q: Will the majority community accept the devolution package?

A: I think they already have. We have received a very good response.

She said the main opposition party has not helped the government in this effort although individual members have supported it.

Tamil Leader Interviewed on Devolution Issue

BK1112090795 Colombo SUNDAY OBSERVER in English 10 Dec 95

[Interview with unidentified leader of the Tamil United Liberation Front by Lakshman Gunasekara; place and date not given — received via Internet]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Question: The Sri Lankan State actually began implementing devolution as a solution to the problems of minorities, only after, and because of, the military pressure by the Tamil separatist rebel movement. The recent armed forces offensive against the LTTE [Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam] has caused a weakening of that military pressure on the State. Does the Sri Lankan political establishment have the will to pursue devolution without this pressure?

Answer: I don't agree that devolution was the result of military pressure by the Tamils on the State. The first proposals for any devolution was as early as the Donoughmore Constitution. Subsequently, the principle of devolution was inherent in the Bandaranaike-Chelvanayakam Pact and the Dudley-Chelvanayakam Pact. There was no military pressure at that point of time. Of course, subsequently, the fact that the youth had taken to arms, certainly was a factor which compelled the Sinhala government to come out with proposals for devolution. We do not know how far the military pressure of the LTTE has been weakened by what has happened in Jaffna. But the President has repeatedly said that she is keen to solve the ethnic problem. It was as a solution to the ethnic problem that she put forward the devolution proposals. She has, since then, also been saying that she is keen to have those proposals in legal form and to have them implemented. I do not think that any weakening of the military strength of the LTTE will make her change her mind.

Q. But is the President's individual commitment to devolution adequate? There seems to be growing sentiment among the Sinhalese, subsequent to the government offensive's success, that there may be no need to have any more political reform...

A. If any Sinhalese feels that way, they are gravely mistaken. The entry of troops into Jaffna is not the end of the strife. Nor is it even the beginning of a political solution. So, if the Sinhalese think that with the entry of troops into Jaffna the ethnic problem is solved, then they are making a very very grave mistake. This could even damage relations between the Tamils and the Sinhalese even more than has happened in the past.

Q. Do you think that both the mainstream Sinhala parties, the People's Alliance [PA] and the United National Party [UNP], will co-operate in implementing political reform?

A. As far as the PA is concerned, they have already put forward these proposals, and I take it that they were drawn up with the consent of, at least, the leadership of the PA. Many ministers have publicly endorsed the proposals presented by the President on August 3. So, I assume that the PA will go ahead with implementing these proposals by presenting them in legal form to the Parliamentary Select Committee, and thereafter, the Parliament and the country. As far as the UNP is concerned, they have not rejected the proposals. What they are saying is that while they are not against devolution of power, they want to wait till the legal form is put forward by the Government before deciding what to do. I feel that if the UNP is made to believe that the minorities, that is both the Tamils and the Muslims, are in favour of these proposals, they will think twice before rejecting the proposals, because if they do so they will be forfeiting the support of the minorities for all time. I am sure the UNP leadership is conscious of this fact, and the present leadership may be also keen to project an image of being fair to the minorities.

Q. The LTTE has already rejected peace talks. What are the prospects for any talks in the future?

A. One cannot say exactly what the LTTE's thinking is. If we look at such movements in the world, whether it is the Palestinian Liberation Organisation, the Irish Republican Army or the African National Congress, you will see that at some point of time, they have come to the negotiating table. But the Tamil people must be convinced that the Government is serious and sincere about implementing the proposals of August 3. If that happens, I feel that the LTTE may come for talks.

Q. What can be done about the large population pushed out of Jaffna city by the LTTE?

A. I don't know whether it is correct to describe the exodus of people from Jaffna as being the result of their being "pushed out" by the LTTE. There may have been a certain amount of coercion by the LTTE. But there is also no denying the fact that the Tamil people had legitimate fears of danger to themselves, judging by the action of the military in the past in both the North and the East. So, that motivation was also there for the exodus, quite apart from any coercion by the LTTE.

Q. Do you think that if the fighting dies down, at least in the Peninsula area, the displaced population might begin to come back?

A. If there is a ceasefire, and if the Tamil people are satisfied that the Government is indeed putting forward a political solution, the people who have moved out might move back.

Q. I was looking at the difficult conditions on the ground and the natural desire of people to go back where they were living; that even if there is no ceasefire all-island, if the fighting dies down in the North (although it may flare up in the East), this might be an opportunity for those who want to go back to their homes, and businesses and fields?

A. I say once again that the Tamil people who are displaced today must be satisfied that the Government is serious and sincere about a political settlement. The people will naturally wonder whether there is any use in going back and risking undergoing again the kind of suffering they have undergone in the past because of the conflict. So, whatever the Government may do about the fighting, it must be coupled with a satisfactory progress on the political front.

Q. But the ordinary people who are displaced are not necessarily that politically mobilised to want to remain in their current condition. If there is a situation of relative calm, at least in the Valikamam sector, and if there is an impressive programme of rehabilitation, reconstruction, and restoring of civilian administration, might there not be a spontaneous desire by the people to go back, irrespective of the long term political prospects. How will the TULF [Tamil United Liberation Front] approach that kind of development?

A. The Tamil people know what they want. They want a political solution. They did not go through all these years of suffering without coming to this realisation. So, whatever other attractions the Government might offer, unless the people are satisfied that there is also going to be a political solution, I am doubtful whether the Tamil people who have been displaced will move back.

Q. The virtual dismantling of the semi-State structure run by the LTTE in the Valikamam sector and the weakening of their political hegemony in that area, leaves a kind of political vacuum there. What are the prospects of the non-LTTE Tamil political organisations resuming activity there?

A. Speaking for the TULF: we will certainly not resume unless there is a political solution. When we start political work, what are we to tell the Tamil people? What we must be able to tell the Tamils is: 'Here is a political solution', now let us make it work'. We must be able to at least say that. Otherwise, there is no point in our going and doing politics in Jaffna.

Q. Doesn't the TULF then run the risk of leaving room for the younger, former Tamil militant groups like the PLOTE [People's Liberation Organization of Tamil Eelam], TELO [Tamil Eelam Liberation Organization] and even EPDP [Eelam People's Democratic Party], who might take the opportunity to go there and build their constituencies.

A. They have tried that in the past and not succeeded. If they go into Jaffna without a political solution, the Tamil people won't go along with them. Given a political solution, everyone will be ready to go and work.

Q. But a political solution could take time - if not years, at least many months. Till then, do the displaced people in the North have to remain as they are?

A. The ultimate solution is a different matter. But there must be evidence that the Government is moving in that direction. The first move in that direction would be to place the legislative form of the devolution proposals before the Parliamentary Select Committee. Then the people will know that here is something substantial.

Q. Does it mean then that if there is that kind of demonstration of intent on the part of the Government, the TULF will be ready to give leadership at a civilian political level in Jaffna?

A. That depends on the content of the devolution package. If there is any dilution of powers, if there is any going back on what has already been promised, then of course the TULF will not be a party to any such programme.

Q. As far as the proposals go today, do you find them a good basis for a settlement?

A. They are a good basis for a settlement. There are a few very important matters to be settled, but certainly it is a basis for a settlement. One matter still to be finalised is the unit of devolution.

Q. If, in the coming months, despite hostilities, perhaps in the East, the Government does place devolution legislation in Parliament, acceptable legislation that is, will the TULF co-operate by providing civilian political leadership in the North?

A. It is not a question of leadership. What matters is whether the Tamil people accept the proposals. If the package is a reasonable one which we can accept, the TULF will campaign among the Tamil people that they should accept it. But it should be a reasonable set of proposals which must include the unit of devolution. We are still pinning our faith on President Kumaratunga on the basis of what she presented on August 3. I must emphasise that both sides, the Government and the LTTE, must seriously consider a ceasefire.